

ISRAEL:
ITS PLACE IN
HISTORY
AND PROPHECY
DORLEY
A. BERG

REST THE LAZARUS



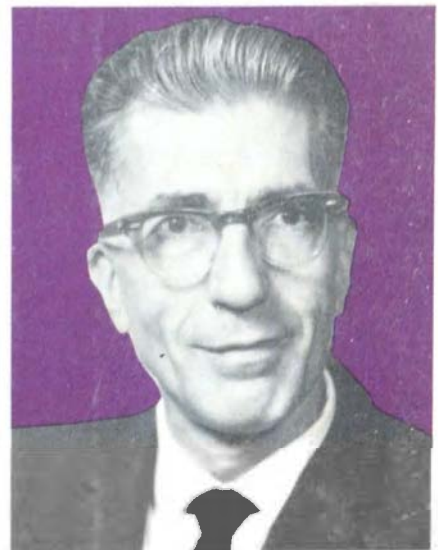
Is there any land of comparable size anywhere on the globe that has demanded the attention of the world so consistently over the centuries as has Palestine? In fact, is there any region of any size that has done so? Are there any people anywhere on the globe that have attracted so much attention over the centuries as have the Jews? We believe the answer to each question is No.

The reasons for this seemingly disproportionate importance are many and varied: geographical, political, ethnological, religious, Biblical.

The Christian finds his main interest to be on the Biblical grounds. In Scripture are predictions regarding the Jews that have led some to claim that the present Israeli state, and what is happening there today, is a fulfillment of prophecy; others, that it is not. Having studied the subject over a period of 25 years, the author offers in this book reasoned arguments for his conclusions. If you are interested in the question of Israel and Bible prophecy, you owe it to yourself to read what he has to say■

Orley M. Berg, executive editor of *The Ministry* magazine, a publication of the Ministerial Association of Seventh-day Adventists, has had wide experience as a pastor and an evangelist. In addition, he has a special interest in the subjects of Bible prophecy and Near East archeology, which in many ways are complementary.

He has visited the Holy Land on three occasions, has dug at ancient Gezar with Dr. G. Ernest Wright, and traveled in the Negeb with the famous Jewish archeologist Nelson Glueck. Elder Berg's home is in Takoma Park, Maryland■



THE BOOK AND THE AUTHOR

THE RESTLESS LAND

**ISRAEL:
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HISTORY
AND PROPHECY**

POSTHE LANDS

**ISRAEL:
ITS PLACE IN
HISTORY
AND PROPHECY**

**ORLEY
M. BERG**

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DEDICATION

To Dr. Siegfried H. Horn, with whom I made my first visit to the Holy Land in 1957, and Dr. Lawrence T. Geraty, with whom I traveled throughout Israel in 1970.

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In the preparation of this material the author gratefully acknowledges the valuable assistance of Robert L. Odom, long-time minister, missionary, editor, theologian, linguistic scholar, and author. His careful checking of the manuscript and the many helpful suggestions have been deeply appreciated as are also his generous words that form the introduction of this volume.

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INTRODUCTION

Since 1948 the existence of the State of Israel in Palestine has been a historical fact that mankind cannot ignore. Her occupation of Jerusalem since June, 1967, has been a matter of such great political and religious significance that the whole world is watching with interest and concern to see what the ultimate results will be. About one fifth of the world's Jewish population is now concentrated in that little strip of land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea. It has been described as a Jewish island surrounded by an ocean of 100 million Arabs.

A great deal of literature has been produced concerning the present and the future of the State of Israel. Some of the challenging questions raised by religious writers are these:

Is the present establishment of the State of Israel in Palestine a fulfillment of Bible prophecy? Will it be a restoration of the nation of Israel *as a theocracy* under the terms of the covenant God made with the Hebrew people at Mount Sinai in the time of Moses? Will it soon officially recognize and accept Jesus of Nazareth in person as its King Messiah?

Into this new book Orley M. Berg has packed a lot of thought-provoking Biblical research. Especially valuable is his assessment of the future status of the modern State of Israel in the light of the prophecy of Daniel 2 (particularly verse 44) and that of Revelation 20, which many religious writers either have ignored or to which they have given but little consideration. His assessment helps in seeking the answer to the question: Will the modern State of Israel become a restoration of the

ancient Israelite theocracy, with Jesus reigning over it as King Messiah upon the throne of David, during the thousand years immediately following His advent in glory as Lord of lords and King of kings?

The author, a veteran student of Biblical eschatology and an alert editor of religious literature, has not only read widely on the subject of this book but also has personally spent time in the State of Israel in pursuit of data relevant to it. He has brought the question of the restoration of Israel in fulfillment of Bible prophecy into focus, and thereby has made a valuable contribution to contemporary literature on that subject. To those who watch with interest the unrolling of the scroll of Bible prophecy concerning the world's future, I recommend this book.

ROBERT L. ODOM

A Cherished Land

The Covenant Promise

Disobedience and Exile A Nation on Probation

The Jews and the Gospel The Jew Confirms the Book The Present State of Israel

Will the Temple Be Rebuilt?

A Better Country A Wonderful Prophecy

- 13** If I Forget You—The Best and the Worst—The Six-Day War—Theological Implications—Is a New Israelite Theocracy in Palestine Probable?
- 23** A Chosen Nation—A Covenant of Obedience—Blessings and Curses—Possession and Obedience—Give Us a King—The Temple Dedication.
- 35** The Land Laid Waste—The Future Foretold—The Potter.
- 40** When Time Ran Out—The Parable of the Householder—Preaching From Isaiah—What More Could He Do?
- 50** In Debt to the Jews—The Tree Remains.
- 60** An Incredible Story.
Nation Under God—A New Ruler
- 64** in Israel—Zionism—Religion in Israel—Politics and Religion—A Restless People.
- 80** The Temple in History—A Temple in the Heavens—Passion Play of the Ages—The Jerusalem Temple Destroyed—God's Plan for Israel—A Brighter Day.
- 92** Heirs of the Promise—Isaiah, Prophet of Hope.
- 98** A Parallel Prophecy—The Coming of the Messiah King—The Millennial Reign—The Earth Made Empty—The New Jerusalem.

A Cherished Land

THE MOST significant area in all the world is the Middle East. All together it comprises a land area about the size of the United States. Geographically, it is the meeting place of three great continents, where the ancient trade routes crossed, and where today, as in the days of antiquity, the great powers of the world confront one another. The international situation in the Middle East is as significant to the future peace of the world as is any other current development.

Because of its wealth in natural resources, the Middle East is one of the most coveted of all land areas, for it holds more than two thirds of the world's known oil reserves. Whatever nation, or nations, controls Middle East oil has a hand on the throat of Europe and the United States, as was vividly demonstrated by the 1973-1974 energy crisis. Besides oil, the wealth in the Dead Sea alone is estimated at more than two hundred trillion dollars. Because of its varied climate, the Middle East produces agricultural products of every kind.

The Middle East is the cradle of civilization. It was on Mount Ararat that Noah and his family disembarked after the Flood. It was from that part of the earth that the human race dispersed over the world. Later it became the birthplace of three great religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

Situated in the heartland of the Middle East is Palestine. Palestine forms the land bridge between the surrounding nations. The great trade routes and military highways of antiquity passed through its borders. Because of its strategic situation, the Pharaohs of Egypt and the rulers of Assyria, Babylonia, Greece, and Rome fought for control of Palestine.

It was to this land that God called Abraham. It was here that the Jewish nation was later established. Except for the period of her exile, she continued to dwell here until driven out by the power of ancient Rome. Thereafter, for more than 1,900 years, the Jews survived as wanderers among the nations.

Finally, on May 14, 1948, under the auspices of the United Nations, the new State of Israel was born. Once again Jews had their own sovereign land. But although it was back in Palestine, the State of Israel without old Jerusalem was a widow. This situation, however, was changed with the reoccupation of the city during the dramatic Six-Day War of June, 1967.

If I Forget You

It is difficult for us to imagine the hopes and longings with which many scattered Jews have looked forward to the opportunity of establishing themselves in Palestine and their occupation of Jerusalem. Through the years of exile these cries were found in the words of the psalmist, "If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand wither away; let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth if I do not remember you, if I do not set Jerusalem above my highest joy" (Ps. 137:5, 6, N.E.B.).*

To many Jews the world is an eye, and Jerusalem the

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pupil of the eye. The two most solemn occasions of the year for the Jew are the Passover and the Day of Atonement. Through the centuries these annual observances, celebrated by Jews around the world, found their climax in the proclamation: "Next Year in Jerusalem!" Encapsuled in the Hatikvah, the Jewish national anthem, are these words:

"So long as still within our breasts
The Jewish heart beats true,
So long as still towards the East,
To Zion, looks the Jew,
So long our hopes are not yet lost—
Two thousand years we cherished them—
To live in freedom in the land
Of Zion and Jerusalem."

Jerusalem, to the Jews, is a city of extrasensory dimension. She is a city beheld in a trance, a way of exaltation, a vision and a promise. When the Jews were driven out of the Holy Land, the land continued to dwell in them, and Jerusalem on earth continued as Jerusalem in the soul.

Writes Abraham Joshua Heschel, "God had a vision of restoring the image of man. So He created a city in heaven and called it Jerusalem, hoping and praying that Jerusalem on earth may resemble Jerusalem in heaven. Jerusalem is a recalling, an insisting, and a waiting for the answer to God's hope."—*Israel, an Echo of Eternity*, p. 32. Again he states, "Jerusalem is more than a place in space or a memorial to glories of the past. Jerusalem is a prelude, anticipation of days to come."—*Ibid.*, p. 36.

Jerusalem might be considered the most important city on earth. With reverence the medieval cartographers called her "the navel of the world" and placed her at the

center of their maps. In the Bible she is given many sacred names. Isaiah speaks of her as "the city of Jehovah," "the city of righteousness," "the daughter of Zion," "the faithful city," "the holy city," "the holy mountain of Jehovah," "my holy mountain," and "Zion of the Holy One of Israel."

The Best and the Worst

Through the centuries Jerusalem has mirrored the best and the worst. It has witnessed the words and deeds of the greatest of the prophets. It has felt the cruelties of the most murderous fiends. It has seen the world's greatest revivals, and its deepest apostasies.

Her very existence, like that of the Jew himself, is in defiance of history. No city has experienced such devastation and bloodshed, or survived as many attempts to destroy her. She has experienced 40 sieges and 32 partial destructions. She has risen from ashes five times and has changed hands at least 26 times. She has suffered four wars in the past twenty-five years. Today Jews occupy this city and much of Palestine again, but with her very presence and continued existence under constant threat.

To the devout Jews, the establishment of the State of Israel, and particularly the recapture of Jerusalem, is the fulfillment not only of the dream and hopes of many centuries but of the prophecies of the Sacred Scrolls.

Pinchas Peli, editor of the well-known Israeli weekly *Panim El Panim*, declares, "I can find no better description of the return of the Jews to the land of Israel . . . than in prophecies recorded thousands of years ago by almost every prophet and psalmist of Israel. . . . We already are on a very advanced stage of the arrival of the Messianic Era—not just on the verge of it. Our casting doubt on this is tantamount to questioning the validity

of Torah and prophecy.”—*Tradition* 10:1 (Summer of 1968).

Visitors to Israel today are frequently reminded of the miraculous in Israel's possession of the land and the sacred city. There is the almost incredible account of Safad during the War of Liberation, a story already grown into a legend, and made very real to me by my visit there. Safad is the highest city in Palestine, and overlooks the Sea of Galilee. At the outbreak of the conflict in 1947, her inhabitants included about 12,000 Arabs and 1,700 Jews, most of whom were elderly, pious people. The Arabs dominated all the strategic positions in the town and controlled its single entrance. They were reinforced by neighboring Syria and Lebanon. To bring help to the Jews, 120 young men succeeded in crossing the Arab lines under cover of darkness. With the British evacuation of the town, these Jews stormed the Arab position, conquering the city on the eleventh day of May, 1948. In a lovely park in Safad stands a memorial plaque commemorating the notable victory.

Traveling north of the Sea of Galilee toward ancient Dan, one arrives at a formidable gray, three-story fortress, with observation tower above. It is one of several erected by the British during the Mandate in their efforts to keep out illegal entries. During the War of Liberation this fortress was seized by the Lebanese. Their plan was to unite with the Syrians from across the valley and penetrate into Israel. But during the night a small company of Jews succeeded in infiltrating their lines and retaking it. Twenty-eight Jews died in the conflict. Hence the name—“Fortress of the Twenty-eight.”

Many such stories of valor live today in Israel. The crowning evidence, however, that they were in the line of divine Providence in the reoccupation of Palestine,

came to the Jews in the lightning victories of the Six-Day War. It was more than even they could have anticipated.

The Six-Day War

Representatives of the three major branches of Judaism, in a meeting in New York City, February 23, 1968, agreed that the events of the Six-Day War had provoked a drastic rethinking of the role of the State of Israel. Rabbi David Polish of Beth Emet Free Synagogue, Evanston, Illinois, representing Reform Judaism declared, "The restoration of sovereignty to Israel stands second only to the Exodus." He spoke of the establishment of Israel and the victories of the Six-Day War as "capable of interpretation only in theological terms."

Rabbi Shubert Spero of Young Israel of Cleveland, the Orthodox spokesman emphasizing the Messianic significance, said that religious Jews "must be prepared to look upon the present State of Israel as a stage in the process of becoming the awaited 'Kingdom of Priests and Holy Nation.' "

In 1937 David Ben-Gurion, chairman of the Executive of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, was testifying before the British Royal Commission. Lord Peel, chairman of the Commission, had remarked, "The mandate is your Bible." To this, Mr. Ben-Gurion replied: "The Bible is our mandate. The mandate of the League is only a recognition of this right and did not establish new things."

A few days after the capture of Jerusalem an editorial in the *Day-Jewish Journal* of New York City said, "Should Israel, after God Himself brought back to them Old Jerusalem as the result of a war that had been forced upon them, not use the opportunity to realize now the

prophecies of their saints and prophets in various ages? All indications are that it is the will of God that Jerusalem no less than the State of Israel itself, should be rebuilt under Jewish control as the capital of the Jewish state."—Quoted in *Christian Life*, November, 1967.

Theological Implications

Not only do religious Jews claim possession of Palestine and Jerusalem on Biblical and theological grounds but this view is shared by many Christians. Prominent among them is Dr. Wilbur M. Smith, eminent Biblical scholar. Writing in *Christianity Today*, December 24, 1956, he states that there are 141 passages of the Old Testament (57 in Deuteronomy alone) in which God is said to *give* the land of Canaan to Israel. Writing later in *Decision*, October, 1967, after the capture of Jerusalem, he declares, "Not only is peace promised as the prevailing condition in Jerusalem in the days to come, but it is through the city of Jerusalem, it seems, that peace will come to the nations of the earth."

In a letter to the editors of *Christianity Today*, appearing July 3, 1970, a reader states, "From the divine viewpoint, however, I think we have little to worry about. It seems clear from prophecy . . . that any military power attempting to overcome Israel is in for it from God. . . . World powers beware! To pick a fight with Israel is to pick a fight with God, and his firepower is awesome."

Writing upon the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the State of Israel, Dr. Raymond L. Cox chose the title "25 Years of Miracles." He affirms that God does have a special interest in the modern state. To him Israel's survival during the War of Independence in 1948 was nothing short of a miracle. "How did a mere half-million inadequately-armed people hold back a flood of 50 million

sworn enemies?" he asks.—*Eternity*, May, 1973.

Dr. Cox points to the Bible as the main integrating agent when General Moshe Dayan's forces made the 100-hour race to Suez in 1956. Concerning the Six-Day June War he writes, "Moreover, many Jews still talk about what seem to be the 'miracles' of June, 1967. One incident involved a sandstorm. The sudden blast brought dismay to Israeli forces who were ready to rush into an Arab section. It threatened to delay the advance. But then the storm abated as instantly as it commenced—leaving menacing Arab mines fully exposed! How many lives the change in weather saved is impossible to estimate."—*Ibid.*

Cox writes also of the miracles of agriculture accomplished by the Jews and of the continuing numbers that still swell her population. He concludes the article with the words, "No one knows how many years. But one thing is certain: the best is yet to come for Israel—and all God's children."—*Ibid.*

Despite these convictions, there are others that see Jerusalem as one of the greatest stumbling blocks toward negotiations for peace in the Middle East. John H. Davis, former Commissioner-General of the United Nations Works and Rehabilitation Agency in the Middle East, writing in the May, 1969, bulletin of the Kuwait Mission to the United Nations, states, "There can be no lasting peace in the Middle East so long as Israel attempts to hold on to Jerusalem. . . . Israel cannot now, or ever, manage Jerusalem to the satisfaction of the three great faiths."—*Religious News Service*, May 9, 1969.

Today, ecumenical dialog is going on between Christians and Jews. In an editorial in the *Lamp* magazine, a Christian Unity monthly, Editor Charles Angell states, "The inability of many Christians to give special theologi-

cal status to the existence of the State of Israel, as distinct from any other political state, is a major source of tension in discussions between Christians and Jews."

Is a New Israelite Theocracy in Palestine Probable?

The profound and serious implications of the prophecies of the Bible as they relate to the past, present, and future status of the Jews and the State of Israel are very apparent. As noted, there are those who understand the modern State of Israel to be a restoration of the ancient commonwealth in fulfillment of prophecy. Certain Christian circles teach that she is to become a new theocracy under the reign of Jesus Christ at His second advent, as King Messiah, and during the millennium that follows.

In the time of Moses, during Israel's encampment at Mount Sinai, she was clearly incorporated as a church and a nation under the direct government of God. The people entered into a solemn covenant with Him, accepting His authority (see Ex. 24:3-8). As a theocracy, God was their Ruler. The work of Moses, the seventy elders, the rulers and judges, was simply to enforce the laws God had given; they had no authority to legislate for the nation. From age to age, men inspired by God were sent to instruct the people and direct them in the keeping of His laws.

When the Israelites first entered Canaan under the rule of Joshua they abided by the principles of the theocracy and prospered. Though later God conceded to their request for a king that they might be governed like other nations, He reserved the right to decide who the king should be. As with the former rulers, the king was to serve only as vicegerent of the Most High. Finally, in fulfillment of the prophecy of Ezekiel 21:26, 27, the crown, removed from Israel, passed successively

to the kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. The Lord said, "It shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him." This is evidently a reference to the Messiah as the rightful and ultimate King of Israel.

Nowhere in the Bible is it stated that at some time between the destruction of the Jewish commonwealth by the Romans and the glorious second advent of Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords the ancient theocracy would be restored in the Holy Land. It is also recognized, however, that at no place in the Bible is it indicated that there would not be the establishment of a Jewish state such as exists in Palestine today.

Although the present Jewish state is seemingly working miracles in its absorption of the ever-increasing population to whom it is the long-awaited homeland, there is no Bible evidence that it will ever become a theocracy, that is—a religio-political commonwealth directly governed by God Himself as its King and Law-giver. The reader is encouraged to examine the evidence set forth in the succeeding pages, keeping in mind that nothing stated is intended in any way to detract from the significance and blessing that the Jewish state has become to such large numbers, many of whom for the first time find themselves with a land they can call their own.

The Covenant Promise

ALMOST FOUR thousand years ago Abraham received a divine "mandate" respecting Palestine. He was told, "Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever" (Gen. 13:14, 15).

Later, the promise was repeated, "In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates" (chap. 15:18). And again, "I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. . . . And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant. . . . And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession" (chap. 17:2-8).

The same promise was confirmed to Isaac, son of Abraham. "Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father; and I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (chap. 26:3, 4).

In the verse that follows is given God's reason for thus choosing Abraham. "Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws" (verse 5).

Jacob was the son of Isaac, through whom the birth-right blessing was given. To him Isaac repeated the promise, "God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people; and give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham" (chap. 28:3, 4).

Later God spoke directly to Jacob in a dream, "I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; . . . and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (verses 13, 14). This promise was repeated in later life: "The land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land" (chap. 35:12). Finally upon his deathbed, Jacob restated the promise to Joseph, his son (see chap. 48:4).

A Chosen Nation

At Mount Sinai the Israelites—descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—were set apart by God as His chosen nation. Israel was then to be taken into a close and peculiar relationship to the God of all the earth—that of being incorporated as a theocracy, a religious organization and a political commonwealth, united under the direct government of God Himself. The Lord Himself instructed Moses to explain clearly to His people what His purpose was for them, and what conditions they should subscribe to in order to enjoy the high privilege

and honor of their sacred calling.

After reminding them of how He had delivered them from Egyptian bondage, the Lord said: "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation" (Ex. 19:5, 6).

Note particularly that this special covenant relationship of Israel with God, as His kingdom of priests and a holy nation, was promised on the condition of their faithfulness and obedience to His word. They were not forced into the formation of a theocracy. But *they were invited to enter into this sacred pact* with the Most High. And of their own free will they accepted. "Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the Lord commanded him. And all the people answered together, and said, *All that the Lord hath spoken we will do*. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the Lord" (verses 7, 8).

When the grand day came for the ratification of that covenant, "Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, *All the words which the Lord hath said will we do*" (chap. 24:3). All of these negotiations, and the terms of the covenant were written by Moses in a book, which he "read in the audience of the people: and they said, *All that the Lord hath said will we do and be obedient*. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words" (verses 7, 8). Thus the covenant was entered into by which Israel was established as a theocracy. Under this arrangement God was their King

and Lawgiver. Their judges and kings were to serve only under the divine direction. This covenant relationship was solemnly ratified by the religious ceremony of the presentation of burnt offerings and peace offerings. A portion of the blood of those sacrifices was used in the sprinkling of the people and the book of the covenant.

Nevertheless, approximately six weeks later there occurred their great apostasy in worshiping the golden calf, which greatly grieved the Lord, to whom they had solemnly pledged their loyalty and obedience. Moses, as their faithful leader, interceded for them before God and pleaded that He would pardon them their grievous sin. Claiming the covenant promise, Moses said in supplication: "Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever" (chap. 32:13).

It is particularly important to note that obedience was laid down as the condition upon which the promise of the covenant could be fulfilled. It was Abraham's obedience that made him the original recipient of the promise. It would be Israel's continued obedience that would make it possible for the benefits of the promise to be realized.

A Covenant of Obedience

At Sinai the blessings that would come to Israel through obedience were enumerated, then the results of disobedience were given. Among the latter would be their dispossession from the land. "And I will bring the land into desolation: and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it. And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you:

and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste. . . . Ye shall have no power to stand before your enemies. And ye shall perish among the heathen, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up" (Lev. 26:32-38).

Israel was then given the promise, "If they shall confess their iniquity. . . . Then will I remember my covenant . . . and I will remember the land" (verses 40-42). Notice that restoration to the land would be possible, but only on the basis of repentance.

When Israel came to the borders of the Promised Land, God repeated his instructions to Moses, reaffirming the promise, and stating again what the results of disobedience would be: "Ye shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you. . . . And ye shall dispossess the inhabitants of the land, and dwell therein: for I have given you the land to possess it. . . . But if you will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you . . . I shall do unto you, as I thought to do unto them" (Num. 33:52-56).

Standing on the very borders of Canaan, Moses rehearsed to Israel the words spoken at Horeb, "Behold, I have set the land before you: go in and possess the land which the Lord swore unto your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give unto them and to their seed after them" (Deut. 1:8). After reviewing the miraculous way in which God had cared for them through their wilderness wanderings, he continued, "Therefore shall ye keep all the commandments which I command you this day, that ye may be strong, and go in and possess the land, whither ye go to possess it; and that ye may prolong your days in the land, which the Lord swore unto your fathers" (chap. 11:8, 9).

A further reading of this chapter reveals again the blessings promised Israel, but always on the basis of obe-

dience, "lest ye perish quickly from off the good land which the Lord giveth you" (verse 17). Repeatedly the association of obedience to possession is stated. Moses declared, "Lay up these my words in your heart. . . . Ye shall teach them your children. . . . And thou shalt write them upon the door posts of thine house, and upon thy gates: that your days may be multiplied, . . . in the land which the Lord sware unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth. For if ye shall diligently keep all these commandments . . . ; then will the Lord drive out all these nations from before you" (verses 18-23). "Ye shall . . . possess the land. . . . And ye shall observe to do all the statutes and judgments which I set before you this day" (verses 31, 32).

Blessings and Curses

Through Moses, Israel was instructed that upon their entrance into the land they were to write the words of the law, and the statutes, upon plastered stones set up on the slopes of Mount Ebal at Shechem. There the blessings for obedience and the curses for disobedience were to be pronounced in the hearing of the people. Among the blessings was the promise, "The Lord shall establish thee an holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments. . . . And the Lord shall make thee plenteous in goods . . . in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers to give thee" (chap. 28:9-11).

Moses continued, "But it shall come to pass if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee" (verse 15). Among the curses: "The Lord shall make the pestilence cleave unto thee, until

he have consumed thee from off the land, whither thou goest to possess it. . . . Thou shalt be only oppressed and crushed alway. . . . The Lord shall bring thee, and thy king which thou shalt set over thee, unto a nation which neither thou nor thy fathers have known. . . . Thou shalt beget sons and daughters, but thou shalt not enjoy them; for they shall go into captivity. . . . Ye shall be plucked from off the land. . . . And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other. . . . And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind: and thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life" (verses 21-66).

Although in Deuteronomy, God's gift of Palestine to Israel is mentioned no less than 57 times, it should be added that in every instance the promise is given on condition of obedience. Should they be driven from the land through disobedience, there was the possibility of their return, but only upon their "return unto the Lord" (chap. 30:2). "Then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee. . . . And the Lord thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good" (verses 3-5).

The book of Deuteronomy consists of several farewell messages delivered by Moses to God's people on the borders of Canaan. The second of these closes with the solemn appeal, "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou

and thy seed may live: that thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days: that thou mayest dwell in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them" (verses 19, 20).

Possession and Obedience

Joshua was the second great leader of Israel. The word of the Lord came to him, "Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them" (Joshua 1:2). After the battles of Jericho and Ai, the people gathered at Shechem, where the blessings and the curses were rehearsed according to previous instructions.

Because of Israel's obedience during the days of Joshua, the conquest went forward under the blessing of God, "So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the Lord said unto Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel" (chap. 11:23). Israel was now settled in the Land of Promise.

When "Joshua was old and stricken in years" he rehearsed before the elders the goodness of God and pleaded for continued obedience. He then reminded them again of the consequences of disobedience: "The Lord your God will no more drive out any of these nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the Lord your God hath given you" (chap. 23:13).

Again all Israel gathered at Shechem, where the covenant of obedience was renewed (see chapter 24). And the record goes on to state, "And the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that

outlived Joshua" (Judges 2:7).

Unfortunately, the situation then changed. "There arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord" (verse 10). What followed were cycles of apostasy, oppression, deliverance, and apostasy again. The cause is clearly revealed: "Every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (chaps. 17:6; 21:25).

Give Us a King

The Lord, who knows the mind and heart of men better than they themselves do, foresaw that the time would come when the people of Israel would prefer to be ruled by a human king like the heathen nations around them. Anticipating this, He had said to Moses: "And it shall be, when he [their king] sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites: and it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them" (Deut. 17:18, 19).

Saul, Israel's first king, forsook the Lord and was rejected. Thereupon David, a man after God's own heart, was called to the throne. After a seven-year reign at Hebron, he captured Jerusalem, making it the capital of the empire. Henceforth this city would ever be looked upon as the center of Israel's political and religious life.

David desired to build a beautiful temple to replace the portable tabernacle that had been erected at Sinai and brought with them to Canaan. Though he was permitted to lay the plans and gather the materials, the actual construction was left for Solomon, his son and successor to the throne.

Before his death David assembled the leaders of Israel

to Jerusalem. To them he declared, "I had in mine heart to build an house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the Lord, . . . but God said unto me, Thou shalt not build an house for my name. . . . Solomon thy son, he shall build my house. . . . Moreover I will establish his kingdom for ever, if he be constant to do my commandments and my judgments, as at this day. Now therefore . . . , keep and seek for all the commandments of the Lord your God: that ye may possess this good land, and leave it for an inheritance for your children" (1 Chron. 28:2-8). Thus the conditional nature of the covenant and their continued possession of the land was clearly restated.

During David's magnanimous reign, the borders of the kingdom were greatly enlarged. Under Solomon the gains were consolidated, the Temple erected, and the influence of the empire extended throughout the surrounding nations. This was Israel's greatest hour, her golden age, when God's purposes for her as a nation came nearest to realization.

The Temple Dedication

Solomon's Temple stood as one of the most beautiful structures the world has ever known. And the consecration prayer that he offered at its dedication is one of the most moving to be found in all the Bible. In it he prayed, "And if thy people Israel be put to the worse before the enemy, because they have sinned against thee; and shall return and confess thy name, and pray and make supplication before thee in this house; then hear thou from the heavens, and forgive the sin of thy people Israel, and bring them again unto the land which thou gavest to them and to their fathers. . . . If they sin against thee . . . and thou be angry with them, and deliver them over before their enemies, and they carry

them away captives into a land far off or near . . . if they return to thee with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their captivity, . . . and pray toward their land, which thou gavest unto their fathers, . . . then hear thou from the heavens, even from thy dwelling place, their prayer and their supplications, and maintain their cause" (2 Chron. 6:24-39).

To this prayer, the Lord responded, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." Having promised this, the Lord repeated also the consequences of disobedience, "But if ye turn away, and forsake my statutes and my commandments, . . . then will I pluck them up by the roots out of my land which I have given them; and this house, which I have sanctified . . . will I cast out of my sight, and will make it to be a proverb and a byword among all nations. And this house, which is high, shall be an astonishment to every one that passeth by it; so that he shall say, Why hath the Lord done thus unto this land, and unto this house? And it shall be answered, Because they forsook the Lord God of their fathers" (chap. 7:19-22; see also 2 Kings 9:4-9).

The future of Israel was bright—God's blessings sure—provided they remained faithful. Even should they sin and be driven into captivity, through repentance restoration was assured. But the alternative to obedience and repentance was clearly stated—deportation from the land and desolation of the Temple.

The subsequent apostasy of Israel and their failure to meet the conditions of the covenant are clearly outlined in the Scriptures. Even Solomon forsook the Lord. Although he repented in later life, the seed of revolution and re-

bellion was sown and bore fruit in the revolt of the ten northern tribes and the division of the empire. This took place during the reign of King Rehoboam (931-913 B.C.), son of Solomon. At that time the empire was divided into the kingdom of Israel in the north and the kingdom of Judah in the south.

Disobedience and Exile

AS, FOLLOWING the division, the two nations of Israel sank lower and lower into sin, God sent to them through the prophets warnings of impending disaster, calling them back to Him. But the messengers of the Lord were despised, abused, and in some cases slain. Finally, God's patience ran out and the northern tribes were taken into captivity. "Yet the Lord testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, and by all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets. Notwithstanding they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the Lord their God. And they rejected his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers. . . . Therefore the Lord was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight: there was none left but the tribe of Judah only. . . . So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day" (2 Kings 17:13-23).

About 722-721 B.C. most of the survivors of the ten tribes that formed the northern kingdom were taken away and dispersed into remote provinces of the Assyrian Empire. Only a remnant, the poorest of the land, were permitted to remain. Peoples of other nations conquered

by the Assyrians were moved into Palestine, and the remnant of Jews intermarried with them and became the Samaritan nation. Today a few hundred Samaritans survive, living at Nablus on the slopes of Mount Ebal.

The Land Laid Waste

Unlike Israel, the southern kingdom of Judah experienced several periods of revival and reformation, thus prolonging their occupation of the land. Finally, however, their doom was also sealed. "And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place: but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy. Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary. . . . And all the vessels of the house of God . . . he brought to Babylon. And they burnt the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof. And them that escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon" (2 Chron. 36:15-20).

Judah experienced successive invasions by the Babylonians in 605 B.C., 597 B.C., and 586 B.C. The last resulted in the complete destruction of Jerusalem, including the magnificent Temple.

Among the prophets to live during the declining years of Judah was Jeremiah. He witnessed the three invasions and the destruction of the city. For some twenty-five years he warned of coming judgment and called for repentance. Standing in the gate he pleaded, "Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in

this place. . . . Then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land I gave to your fathers, for ever and ever" (Jer. 7:3-7).

The results of disobedience were also boldly proclaimed, "And I will make Jerusalem heaps, and a den of dragons; and I will make the cities of Judah desolate" (chap. 9:11). Then again, "Because they have forsaken my law . . . I will scatter them also among the heathen" (verses 13-16). And still again, "Obey my voice, . . . that I may perform the oath which I have sworn unto your fathers, to give them a land flowing with milk and honey, as it is this day" (chap. 11:4, 5).

Jeremiah foretold, "Behold, I will pluck them out of their land" (chap. 12:14). But the promise was added, "And it shall come to pass, after that I have plucked them out I will return, and have compassion on them, and will bring them again, every man to his heritage, and every man to his land" (verse 15). But notice, even then continued possession of the land would be conditional. "And it shall come to pass, if they will diligently learn the ways of my people, to swear by my name, The Lord liveth; . . . then shall they be built in the midst of my people. But if they will not obey, I will utterly pluck up and destroy that nation, saith the Lord" (verses 16, 17).

The Future Foretold

Through Jeremiah the Lord named Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, as the one through whom the captivity would be accomplished. He also foretold a captivity of seventy years (see chap. 25:9-11). As predicted, at the close of the seventy years of the Babylonian captivity, many of the Jews did return to their homeland in response to the decree of Cyrus the Great, king of Persia, issued in 537 B.C.

Others followed suit in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, in accordance with the decree of Artaxerxes I (Longimanus), 457 B.C.

Concerning the future of Jerusalem, Jeremiah's promise was, "If ye diligently hearken unto me, . . . then shall there enter into the gates of this city kings and princes sitting upon the throne of David, . . . and this city shall remain for ever" (chap. 17:24, 25). Then in verse 27, "But if ye will not hearken unto me . . . , then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched."

The conditions of the covenant had not changed. If they obeyed, the city would stand; if they disobeyed, it would be laid in ruins. How did they respond? "But they obeyed not, neither inclined their ear, but made their neck stiff, that they might not hear, nor receive instruction" (verse 23).

The Potter

In chapter 18 of Jeremiah is the parable of the potter. The vessel the potter was fashioning was marred in his hands, but "he made it again another vessel" (verse 4). This was what God wanted to do for Israel. Notice, "Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying, O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter?" (verses 5, 6). Then follows the important declaration, "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them" (verses 9, 10).

The conditional nature of the promises made to Israel cannot be overlooked. They would be fulfilled only through obedience, and canceled through disobedience. Unfortunately, the Jewish nation failed to meet the con-

ditions God had laid down for them.

Finally, Jeremiah was told, "Go and get a potter's earthen bottle, and take of the ancients of the people, and of the ancients of the priests; and go forth unto the valley of the son of Hinnom." Having gathered the leaders together, Jeremiah declared, "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, the which whosoever heareth, his ears shall tingle. Because they have forsaken me . . . I will make void the counsel of Judah and Jerusalem in this place; and I will cause them to fall by the sword before their enemies. . . . And I will make this city desolate, and an hissing; every one that passeth thereby shall be astonished and hiss because of all the plagues thereof" (chap. 19:1-8).

Then Jeremiah was asked to dramatize the future of their disobedient course. "Then shalt thou break the bottle in the sight of the men that go with thee, and shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord of hosts: Even so will I break this people and this city, as one breaketh a potter's vessel, that cannot be made whole again" (verses 10, 11). To reinforce the message he declared, "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring upon this city and upon all her towns all the evil that I have pronounced against it, because they have hardened their necks, that they might not hear my words" (verse 15).

History reveals how the nation was broken. According to the prophecy, it "cannot be made whole again."

A Nation on Probation

LONG BEFORE the destruction of Jerusalem and the kingdom of Judah by King Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C., the Lord had foretold that there would be granted another period of probation to His chosen people Israel. In fact, He foretold what ruler would make that possible, and that this restoration of Israel in Jerusalem would include the rebuilding of the temple, which is known in Biblical history as the second temple. The Lord said through Isaiah "to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof: that saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers: that saith of Cyrus [king of Persia], He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid" (Isa. 44:26-28). And again concerning Cyrus, the Lord said: "I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the Lord of hosts" (chap. 45:13).

Through Jeremiah the prophet the Lord foretold that the Babylonian captivity of the Jews would last seventy years (see Jer. 25:11, 12), and that this would be His plan for His people Israel: "For thus saith the Lord, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you,

and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place. . . . I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the Lord; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive" (chap. 29:10-14; see also Dan. 9:2). It came to pass as predicted (see 2 Chron. 36:20-23; Ezra 1:1-4).

This special period of probationary time granted God's chosen people is outlined in the writings of the book of Daniel. Daniel was taken captive to Babylon with the Palestinian invasion of Nebuchadnezzar in 605 B.C. In the courts of the king he gained favor and was soon elevated to the position of prime minister of the empire. There he bore noble witness to the true God. Among the great visions of future events revealed to him as a prophet is that recorded in chapter 9 of his book, a prophecy bearing directly upon the Jewish nation, their city, and the coming Messiah.

In Daniel 9:24 the angel of God declares, "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy." Here are revealed the glorious provisions of the gospel that would be accomplished through the coming of the Messiah.

The Hebrew word rendered as *determined* means "cut off," "set apart," or "decree." *The New English Bible* reads, "Seventy weeks are marked out for your people and your holy city." Seventy weeks would be the equivalent of 490 days. But among Bible students it has long been recognized that in symbolic prophecy a day is used to signify a year (see Num. 14:34; Eze. 4:6). That being

so, we have here a period of 490 years especially set apart for the Jewish nation.

In Daniel 9:25, the starting point of the prophecy is given. "Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks." This is the equivalent of sixty-nine symbolic weeks, or 483 literal years.

When this prophecy was given, the city of Jerusalem lay in ruins as a result of its destruction by King Nebuchadnezzar. But it would be rebuilt, and the decree under which the rebuilding would be accomplished would mark the beginning of this important time period. Three such decrees are noted in Ezra 6:14. However, the one under which the complete restoration of the city was accomplished, thus meeting the full specifications of the prophecy, was the third, that of the Persian King Artaxerxes Longimanus. The decree is recorded in Ezra 7:12-26. Verse 7 states that it was issued "in the seventh year of Artaxerxes the king." That year has been established as 457 B.C.

In the autumn of that year, the decree went into effect. From this date, 483 years would extend to the autumn of A.D. 27. According to the prophecy, this period was to mark the appearing of the Messiah, the Anointed One.

True to the prediction, Jesus was baptized in the autumn of A.D. 27. At His baptism He received the anointing of the Holy Spirit, and began His public ministry (see Acts 10:38). Then He went into Galilee, "preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, *The time is fulfilled*" (Mark 1:14, 15). "The time" referred to was obviously this very time prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27 as indicated in the margins of many Bibles.

Daniel 9:27 declares, "He [the Messiah] shall con-

firm the covenant with many for one week." This prophetic "week," symbolizing seven literal years, would be the last of the seventy weeks (or 490 years) allotted especially to the Jewish nation. During this time, extending from A.D. 27 to A.D. 34, the gospel was to be given especially to the Jews, first by Christ and then by His disciples. It was their day of special opportunity. To His disciples Christ gave the instructions, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 10:5, 6). Of Himself He said, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (chap. 15:24), referring to the primary objects of His ministry.

It was God's plan that the gospel be given "to the Jew first" (Rom. 1:16). It was in Jerusalem and all Judea that the apostles were to begin their work of evangelizing the world (see Acts 1:8), and for a long time they were "preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only" (chap. 11:19).

Despite this special opportunity to hear and accept the Messiah and the gospel, certain of the leaders of the Jews rejected Him and His saving message. Finally they had Him nailed to the cross amid their cries, "His blood be on us, and on our children" (Matt. 27:25). "He came unto his own, and his own received him not" (John 1:11).

Of further events to transpire during this important week, Daniel 9:27 continues, "In the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease." Again, in remarkable fulfillment of the prophecy, in the spring of A.D. 31, three and a half years after His baptism and anointing, in the midst of the seventieth week, Christ, the true Sacrifice, was offered on Calvary. As He expired on the cross "the veil of the temple was rent in

twain from the top to the bottom" (Matt. 27:51), showing that the offerings that for four thousand years had pointed forward to the Lamb of God were at an end. Type had met antitype, and all the typical sacrifices and oblations of the ceremonial system were at an end.

Daniel prophesied also that after the death of the Messiah "the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined" (Dan. 9:26). In foretelling the destruction of Jerusalem and the second temple, Christ specifically directed the attention of His followers to the prophecy of Daniel in particular, urging them not only to read it but also to understand it (see Matt. 24:15; Mark 13:14).

In the light of the Old Testament prophecies and their fulfillment in the person of Jesus Christ, none need ever be mistaken as to the identity of the true Messiah. These events "seal up the vision and prophecy" (Dan. 9:24).

When Time Ran Out

We have seen how the seventy prophetic weeks, or 490 literal years, especially allotted to the Jews ended in the autumn of A.D. 34. At that time also we see events that indicate a striking fulfillment of Scripture. That year the Jewish nation, represented by the Sanhedrin, sealed its rejection of the gospel by the stoning of Stephen, the first Christian martyr (see Acts 7:59). With this act, their day of special favor and privilege came to an end. Henceforth, the gospel would go to the Gentiles, and the promises of the covenant would pass on to spiritual Israel.

The persecution that followed caused a scattering of

the early believers, who "went every where preaching the word" (Acts 8:4). "Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them" (verse 5). Peter, directed by the Holy Spirit, took the gospel to the house of Cornelius, the centurion of Caesarea, to whom he testified, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (chap. 10:34, 35). After the stoning of Stephen, Saul the persecutor was converted and became Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles (see Acts 9:15; 22:21). Thus, the firstfruits were gathered from "every nation, kindred, tongue and people." The Jews could still receive and enjoy all the provisions of the gospel, but they could no longer lay claim to being God's chosen nation.

Before His death, Jesus foresaw their rejection. Approaching Jerusalem for the last time before His betrayal, He cried out, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate" (Matt. 23:37, 38).

The Parable of the Householder

On Tuesday of the passion week, Christ gave the parable of the householder. Those to whom He spoke were the chief priests and elders of the people, the representatives of the Jewish nation. To them He said, "There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country: and when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they

might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? They say unto him, *He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen*, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons. Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, *The kingdom of God shall be taken from you*, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (chap. 21:33-43).

Here Jesus had led them on to testify to their own rejection as a nation. The householder in the parable is God the Father; the vineyard is the Jewish nation; the servants sent to gather the fruit were the prophets who had been persecuted and slain. The son was the Son of God, the Stone that the builders rejected. The "other nation" is the Christian church composed of all who accept the divine provision for salvation, whether Jew or Gentile.

Preaching From Isaiah

It is significant that our Saviour based the parable of Matthew 21 on a prophecy appearing in the fifth chapter of Isaiah. "Now will I sing to my wellbeloved a song of

my beloved touching his vineyard. My wellbeloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: and he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, the men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brough it forth wild grapes? And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: and I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briars and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry" (verses 1-7). This prophecy met its fulfillment in the rejection of Christ by the Jewish nation.

The ultimate rejection of the Jewish nation was also foretold in Jesus' parable of the barren fig tree. "A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down" (Luke 13:6-9).

The Jewish nation is represented again in the parable of the wedding feast (see Matt. 22:1-14) as those that refused to accept the invitation to the wedding. They "took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them" (verse 6). Even the resultant destruction of Jerusalem is no doubt referred to in the verse that follows, "But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and *burned up their city*" (verse 7).

In Matthew 21:43 Jesus declares, "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." It is to this new nation, the whole body of Christians comprised of both Jewish and Gentile converts, that the apostle Peter refers to as "a holy nation, a people for God's own possession" (1 Peter 2:9, *New American Standard Bible*).*

What More Could He Do?

God's plans for Israel were very great. Through discipline He sought to lead them back to Himself. Through the earnest pleadings of the prophets He tried to reach their hearts. Finally John the Baptist declared, "Now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees." They had failed to bring forth fruit, and could not be spared. Then came Jesus, the greatest of the prophets. Weeping over their beloved city, He cried out, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, . . . how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" (Matt. 23:37).

The destruction of their city was foretold, "If thou hadst known . . . the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, . . . and

shall lay thee even with the ground" (Luke 19:42-44; see also chap. 21:20-22).

Fourteen centuries before, the prophet Moses foretold the terror that the hated Romans would bring upon the Jews in the destruction of the Holy City as a result of disobedience: "The tender and delicate woman among you, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, her eye shall be evil toward the husband of her bosom, and toward her son, and toward her daughter, . . . and toward her children which she shall bear: for she shall eat them for want of all things secretly in the siege and straitness, wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates. If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book" (Deut. 28:56-58).

Repentance and obedience were the conditions upon which the promises of blessing and restoration were given. This was stated over and over again by the Old Testament prophets. The destruction of Jerusalem by Titus in A.D. 70 with its indescribable suffering and the subsequent dispersion was a result of their hardness of hearing and slowness to believe and obey. How long and patiently God dealt with Israel! What could He have done for them that He did not do?

* Quoted by permission of The Lockman Foundation, La Habra, California.

The Jews and the Gospel

BY THE ministry and death of Christ and subsequent events the Christian dispensation was ushered in. But, contrary to the thinking of many, Jesus, the disciples, and the early Christian church did not proclaim a new gospel, but one that embodied all the promises to Abraham and the lessons that had come to the Jews in regard to the plan of salvation. True—before the cross the coming of the Messiah and the work He would perform for the salvation of mankind was taught and illustrated by means of types and symbols. He was the Lamb slain on the altar. His blood was sprinkled in type before the mercy seat containing God's holy law, demanding the death of the sinner. The incense represented His righteousness, mingled with the prayers of the saints, ascending to the Father. He was the "light" of the candlestick. He was the "true bread" that came down from heaven.

When Christ died, type met antitype. The system of sacrifices and ceremonies that had for long centuries pointed forward to the Messiah that was to come was now fulfilled in Him. Paul had this in mind when he wrote, "Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby"

(Eph. 2:15, 16). And to the Colossians he wrote, "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross. . . . Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ" (Col. 2:14-17).

The ordinances and ceremonies with their meat and drink offerings, and the ceremonial sabbaths (annual rest days as distinguished from the weekly Sabbath days—see Lev. 23:24, 32, 37-39), which were "shadows of things to come" (the death and ministry of Christ), were nailed to the cross. There they met their fulfillment.

According to the records of the Jerusalem Council, found in Acts 15, it is clearly indicated that the issue before the early Christian church was whether the Gentile converts should be required to be circumcised and to keep the law of Moses, apparently referring to the sacrificial system (see verses 1, 5, 24). Although these observances were ruled to be no longer necessary, the great foundational truths of the gospel illustrated by the temple ritual remained the same and formed the basis for the Christian church. This was the gospel Jesus had in mind when, before His ascension, He gave the commission, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations" (Matt. 28:19).

This world-embracing gospel makes no distinction between Jew or Gentile, barbarian, Scythian, bond or free. It was intended for all the world in Old Testament times, having been given to Israel as light to the Gentiles. But Israel had failed in her mission as its custodian. Now a remnant were taken from the Jewish nation and through them God's plan was to be realized.

There are those who look with contempt upon any-

thing they might think of as "Jewish." The stigma of the "Jewish" Sabbath was one of the strong factors in the establishment of Sunday as the substitute day of worship for Christians. Nevertheless, we find that when God chose His people, Israel, He delivered to them the whole gospel plan, the means by which all people, Jews and Gentiles alike, were to be saved.

In Debt to the Jews

Jesus Himself was a Jew. All the disciples were Jews. The blessing of Pentecost fell upon Jews. The Christian church was at first made up entirely of Jews. One of the great issues that came before it was whether Gentiles should be admitted also.

Paul was the apostle especially chosen to take the light to the Gentiles, and to proclaim the complete equality of Jew and Gentile in the Christian church. To the Ephesians he explained how God had called him to this special work: "That through the Gospel the Gentiles are joint heirs with the Jews, part of the same body, sharers together in the promise made in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 3:6, N.E.B.).

But Paul didn't preach a new gospel. His message found its source in the Old Testament "Jewish" Bible. His greatest love was still for his own people. He said, "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh" (Rom. 9:1-3).

In succeeding verses Paul outlines the many blessings that came through the Jews, all of them provisions for salvation equally important to the Christian church.

Notice what they are: "Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen" (verses 4, 5).

Few appreciate how deeply we are indebted to the faithful Jews, or how closely the Old Testament Scriptures are tied to the New. There is but one great plan of salvation. It was instituted when man first sinned. The Jews were set apart as a special people through whom the knowledge of this plan and of the coming Messiah was to be made known. They were established in Palestine, the most strategic geographical position conducive to the accomplishment of God's purposes for them. They failed as a nation, but through a faithful remnant among them God established the Christian church in order that His original plan might still be accomplished.

Continuing in Romans 9, Paul explains the new relationship between Jews and Gentiles. "For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed" (verses 6-8).

No longer could the Jews claim any special privilege. That was gone forever. Their blood relationship to Abraham would give them no advantage. "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter" (chap. 2:28, 29).

Paul illustrated the new relationship between Jew and

Gentile to the plan of salvation by the olive tree described in the eleventh chapter of Romans. Of it he says, "And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; boast not against the branches" (verses 17, 18).

The olive tree symbolized the Jews as God's people. Some of the individual branches were broken off because of their unbelief and disobedience; and some individual branches from the wild olive tree, representing the Gentile people, were grafted in when they were converted to Christ.

The Tree Remains

Notice that believing Gentiles, as individual branches from the wild olive tree, were grafted into the true Israelite olive tree representing the true church. God did not root out the true Israelite olive tree, which represented His church, and plant a new olive tree consisting of Gentile believers. Not at all! But the converted Gentiles became an integral part of the true Israelite olive tree in order that they might partake of the "root and fatness of the olive tree." God did not come along with a new plan of salvation, a new church, a new law, a new Sabbath, new promises, or a new Messiah. The true olive tree remained the same, except that some of the individual branches of it were cut off "because of unbelief" (verse 20), and others were grafted in.

It is significant that the names which appear on the gates and foundation stones of the New Jerusalem encompass both the Jewish and Christian dispensations. "And had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. . . . And the wall

of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb" (Rev. 21:12-14).

This is a city that will be inherited by all the faithful sons and daughters of Abraham, together with all Gentiles who have become Abraham's seed by faith in Christ (see Gal. 3:26-29). Appropriate, also, in this connection are the words of Jesus, "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God" (Luke 13:28, 29). Here is a picture of the unbelieving Jews who will be cast out, and of the believing Gentiles who will be gathered in from all nations.

Isaiah, the Messianic prophet, foretold this gathering in from the Gentile nations: "Behold, these shall come from far: and, lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim" (Isa. 49:12). "And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising" (chap. 60:3). "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots. . . . And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious" (chap. 11:1, 10).

The apostle Paul quoted these words of Isaiah as he sought to make plain the blessings that would come also to the Gentiles. "And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust" (Rom. 15:12).

Continuing with his discussion of the olive tree in Romans 11, Paul now says of the Gentiles that "if God

spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee" (verse 21). And of the Jews, he says, "And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graff them in again" (verse 23). Don't ever suppose that God has cast off the Jewish people as individuals. They have every opportunity offered to any other. If they "abide not still in unbelief" they will be grafted in again. How logical that this should be so.

Paul continues, "For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?" (verse 24). Yes, indeed, how natural that the Jew be grafted back into his own tree. Notice the emphasis, "how much more . . . the natural branches!" How our hearts should go out to the Jews. Would that we could see more of them returning to their own. How God must love them and want them back!

The Scriptures give us reason to believe that many Jews will yet accept the Messiah and be grafted in again. There will be a remnant that will be saved. Surely, there will yet be many among them who will be a part of the great final gathering of spiritual Israel prophesied of in the Scriptures. They will be a part of the "ransomed of the Lord" who will "come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads" (Isa. 35:10).

In *Time*, October 15, 1951, Dr. Louis Finkelstein, president of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, expressed his convictions that a spiritual renaissance would come to Judaism. He said, "I predict that within 25 years the vast majority of the five million Jews in this country will have returned to their faith and will be keeping the Sabbath. . . . And this will have a pro-

found effect on America and on the whole world."

Is it too much to expect that any sincere effort on the part of the Jews to return to the faith of their fathers would culminate also in their discovery and acceptance of the true Messiah of the Holy Scriptures? Witness the case of Ceil and Moishe Rosen.

Ceil and Moishe were married when Ceil was just out of high school and Moishe was only eighteen years old. Ceil had become a professed atheist, a result of her violent reaction to what she felt to be the restrictive customs of her Jewish parents. Moishe tried to hang on, however weakly, to his observance of at least the more important Jewish feast days, such as *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement.

Although Ceil professed to be an atheist, she had become interested in Jesus and Christianity in high school. Moishe had had his first contact with a real Christian in 1949, which had made an impression upon him. But upon counting the cost he had decided not to question the "most intelligent rabbis." "If all the rabbis get together and say that Jesus is the Messiah, then I'll go along with them," he had concluded. "In the meantime, it's not my problem."

In 1953 Ceil attended a Baptist church and publicly confessed her faith in Jesus. Moishe was greatly troubled, and forbade her to attend church. But that same year he himself became a Christian.

Moishe's father, after breaking all contact with him for the greater part of a year, paid \$50 an hour to have him examined by a psychiatrist, who issued the report: "To whom it may concern: Martin Rosen was examined psychiatrically by the undersigned on August 2 and 3, 1954. He was found to be psychiatrically normal."

Moishe tells his interesting story in the 1974 Flem-

ing H. Revell book, *Jews for Jesus*.

After training in Bible college, Moishe was ordained in 1957 as a Baptist minister and thereafter ministered under the sponsorship of the American Board of Missions to the Jews. In 1970 he founded the now familiar Jews for Jesus movement. In the recent publication he writes, "Every qualified observer, including rabbis who would like to pretend we don't exist, acknowledges that there are now thousands of young Jews for Jesus and countless older Hebrew Christians spreading the Good News in this country and abroad."—Page 123.

As to the future he says, "I have been preaching the gospel to my fellow Jews for more than two decades in many sections of the country, but until the late 1960's the number of Jews coming to Christ represented only a trickle. Now, the trickle has turned into a flood, which carries significant implications for the church, for the Jewish community, and perhaps even for the final destiny of the world itself."—*Ibid.*

Among the closing words of his volume are these, "Many believe that we are living in the end times and that the Second Coming of Christ is imminent. Some people are even using the increasing numbers of Jews who are accepting Christ as an argument that these are the last days. . . . I wouldn't be at all surprised to see a great Jewish revival in the near future, because there are definite tendencies in that direction right now. . . . At the time of this writing, there are Jews for Jesus in most of the large Jewish population centers of the world, and we receive hundreds of letters asking for samples of our materials and instruction in our methods."—*Ibid.*, p. 125.

The return of the Jews to the true faith is possibly envisioned in the prophecy of Hosea who spoke of the latter days. "Many days," the prophet declared, they would

abide "without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim." "Afterward," the prophet continued, "shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days" (Hosea 3:4, 5).

Today we see this coming to pass in the lives of increasing numbers of conscientious Jews. *Time* magazine, June 12, 1972, reports 6,000 to 7,000 Jews, mostly youth, accepting Christianity annually. Are not these but a harbinger of larger numbers who are yet to shine forth as witnesses of the true gospel?

The Jew Confirms the Book

THE JEWS are a unique people. They have always had a genius for adaptability and versatility, always exerting an influence far out of proportion to their numbers, always growing in wealth and power.

Even today, none can fail to recognize the unique position they occupy in almost every position of learning. Lord C. P. Snow, British author and scientist, whose views on moral and ethical issues are world famous, put it this way, "Take any test of achievement you like—in any branch of science, mathematics, literature, music, public life. The Jewish performance is not only disproportionate, but almost ridiculously disproportionate. To use a crude criterion, run your eye down the list of Nobel prize winners for the last 25 years. You will find that something between a third and a quarter have Jewish names." —*Religious News Service*, April 1, 1969.

This is indeed astonishing when we consider that a fair statistical distribution, according to population, would be something less than one Jew in 50 Nobel winners.

To the long list of Jews to show unusual achievement was added in 1972 the name of Mark Spitz, who, with his phenomenal accomplishments in swimming at the Twentieth Olympiad in Munich, Germany, became the first person ever to win seven gold medals.

It is said that when Frederick the Great asked his

chaplain to "put the argument for Christianity into one word," the reply was, "The Jew." On another occasion his nephew, King Frederick of Prussia asked one of his leading clergymen what he thought to be the greatest evidence that the Bible was inspired. The minister responded, "The Jews, your Majesty, the Jews!"

The Jew is indeed a worldwide witness to the truthfulness of Bible prophecy. From almost the dawn of history the Jews have been destined to play an important role, far beyond their numbers. Their very existence today is nothing short of a miracle. No other people have been submitted to more determined efforts toward their annihilation. Still, as one historian puts it, "They have always lived to stand at the graveside of their persecutors." The Jews were oppressed by the powerful Amorites, Hittites, Philistines, Assyrians, Babylonians, and other ancient peoples. But where are these nations now? Not one descendant of their number can be identified today. Still the Jew lives on. The history of his people stands forth as distinct, unparalleled, and unique.

A most heart-rending experience to anyone is a visit to Mount Memorial, standing on a mound in the suburbs of Jerusalem. The bleak and gray building crowning the summit was erected in 1957 in memory of the six million Jews slaughtered by Hitler's regime prior to and during World War II. Known in Hebrew as "Yad VaShem," Monument and Memorial, it houses gruesome reminders of this shameful episode of modern history, man's recent concerted attempt to do what mighty nations of the past have failed to do. On the main floor the names of many of the infamous prison camps appear. At the underground level is an array of life-size prints of slaughter and destruction, enlarged facsimile records of human butchery, bibliographic works, and collections of various sorts.

In spite of all the efforts to eradicate the Jews in Nazi Europe, many survived, and leading Nazis who perpetrated the crimes have faced their courts of justice.

An Incredible Story

The story of the Jews is written in tragedy and blood across the centuries. It is a story that has been preserved more accurately than that of any other people. It is significant that in this incredible story of pathos we find the fulfillment of the predictions of the ancient prophets, who warned so repeatedly and earnestly against a course of disobedience.

In Deuteronomy 28:37 we read, "And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword, among all nations whither the Lord shall lead thee." Even in Bible times these words were fulfilled in their experiences. Later centuries brought no relief. During the Middle Ages the Jews were accused of sorcery and causing all manner of calamities. Sometimes they were forced to wear a badge to identify themselves.

A prophecy in Numbers 23:9 declares: "Lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations." It would be natural for people scattered to other nations to be absorbed among them. But not the Jews. Through the centuries they have remained a distinct people. No race blood of any people has remained purer. All efforts to compromise have failed to assimilate them, as all persecutions have failed to annihilate them.

Concerning their scattering among the nations, we read in Deuteronomy 28:64: "And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from one end of the earth even unto the other." In Old Testament times the Jews were "scattered" by the Assyrians and Babylonians. In Roman times by the Roman generals Titus and Hadrian. Since

then by many others. They have been scattered to practically every country on the globe. Through the centuries they have been a people without a "homeland."

The history of the Jews, and God's dealings with them as a nation and as individuals, is striking evidence of the surety of God's Word, and a marvelous example of the blending of God's justice with His mercy.

The Present State of Israel

TODAY THE State of Israel exists in Palestine, and approximately one sixth of the world's Jewish population reside there as citizens of the country. The establishment of the Jewish State of Israel has become a fact of modern history. It is important, however, that we recognize a distinct difference between the present return of some Jews to Palestine, and a *promised* return based on *conditional promises* that were never met. There is considerable difference between an occupancy of the land, and the restoration of which the promises speak.

The Israel of Old Testament times was a theocracy. As such, her supreme ruler was God. The highly organized legal system given through Moses at Mount Sinai for His chosen people embraced every phase of life—religious, social, and political. There was no separation between church and state. The words of the Lord to His people were, "Ye shall be to me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation" (Ex. 19:6). These words are significant. The primary mission of the theocracy of Israel was that of being "a kingdom of priests" for God to the rest of the world. The mission of a priest is aptly defined in these words: "The priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts" (Mal. 2:7). God intended that through Abraham and his seed all the nations—yea,

all the families—of the earth should be blessed (see Gen. 12:3; 18:18; 26:4; 28:14; Isa. 19:23-25).

As "a holy nation" Israel was to exist as an independent commonwealth, or political entity among the nations, with God as their King and Lawgiver. Thus she was to be a theocracy under the direct government of God as both their King and religious leader.

Nation Under God

In this theocratic government God used His prophets, priests, and kings as His representatives. They were to function *under* God and not *instead* of Him. The work of Moses, of the seventy elders, of the rulers and judges, was simply to enforce the laws that God had given; they had no authority to legislate for the nation. God was to be recognized as the Head of the nation, and His law was to be enforced as the supreme law of the land.

Gideon, one of the judges of Israel, recognized this plan of administration of his nation. When the people said to him, "Rule thou over us, both thou, and thy son, and thy son's son also," he responded with a rebuke: "I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: *the Lord shall rule over you*" (Judges 8:22, 23).

Many other statements in the Bible concur in affirming that in the theocracy of Israel God Himself was King. Here are a few such utterances: "the Lord the King of Israel" (Isa. 44:6); "I am the Lord, your Holy One, the creator of Israel, your King" (chap. 43:15); "the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king" (chap. 33:22); "the king of Israel, even the Lord" (Zeph. 3:15); "the Holy One of Israel is our king" (Ps. 89:18); "the Lord your God was your king" (1 Sam. 12:12); "mount Zion, . . . the city of the great King" (Ps. 48:2).

When the Israelites first settled in Canaan, they acknowledged the principles of the theocracy, and the nation prospered under the good rule of Joshua. In the course of time, however, they became dissatisfied, and asked for a change in government, demanding a king. Their reason was given: "That we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles" (1 Sam. 8:20). Thus they clamored for a less direct rule of God over their lives.

When Samuel the prophet expressed displeasure at this request the Lord informed him, "They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, *that I should not reign over them*" (verse 7). Although during the reigns of David and Solomon, God's plans for Israel came near fruition, still apostasy soon brought decline.

Upon the death of Solomon, and the subsequent rending of the kingdom, the northern tribes were ruled by twenty-four successive kings, all of whom were evil. Speaking through the prophet Hosea of their deplorable condition, the Lord declared: "They made kings, but not through me. They set up princes, but without my knowledge" (Hosea 8:4, R.S.V.).* The people of the nation of Israel were finally taken into Assyrian captivity.

Judah fared somewhat better; eight of her twenty-four rulers "did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord." However, her case also became hopeless to the point that she too was carried into the Babylonian captivity.

With this dispersion in 586 B.C., the kingdom of Israel virtually came to an end. Her future possession of the land was always in the shadow of, or with the permission of, Persia, Greece, or Rome.

* From the *Revised Standard Version*.

However, 490 years of probation were yet accorded to the chosen people, as foretold in Daniel 9:24-27. As we have already seen, this meant that the city of Jerusalem would be restored, and another temple (the second) would exist, with its rounds of priestly ministries and sacrificial services until the coming of the Messiah to minister, suffer, and die for the sins of men. And after He should be cut off, "the people of the prince [of Rome]" would come and "destroy the city [of Jerusalem] and sanctuary [or second temple]." This came to pass in A.D. 70. During this final probationary period of 490 years the Jewish commonwealth in Palestine existed chiefly as a vassal nation subject to the rulers of Persia, Greece, and Rome.

A New Ruler in Israel

But during that probationary period, greater glory than the nation had yet seen was to break forth in spiritual splendor with the coming of the One of whom the prophet had written: "But thou, Bethlehem, Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel" (Micah 5:2).

When Jesus came, He began His preaching on a distinctly theocratic note, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:15). The kingdom of which He spoke was the kingdom of grace entered into through repentance, faith, and personal acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah, Saviour, and Lord.

Those who formed the nucleus of the early Christian church were referred to by Peter in language similar to that of Exodus 19:6: "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of

darkness into his marvellous light" (1 Peter 2:9).

The apostle John, last of the writers of the New Testament, speaks of those who have been made free through the blood of Jesus as "kings and priests," or, according to Phillips' translation, as "a kingdom of priests" (Rev. 1:6). God's kingdom is today made up of all who accept the rulership of King Jesus in their lives. This relationship crosses all racial boundaries. In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek. We are all one in Him.

The time is yet to come when the crucified, resurrected, and ascended Messiah will return to earth as Lord of lords and King of kings. He Himself has said: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory" (Matt. 25:31). Then the redeemed of all the ages will shout, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. 11:15). It is then that "the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign . . . ; and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:32, 33). This will be done in fulfillment of the prophecies of Daniel 2:44 and 7:14, 22, 27. When this long-awaited event has taken place, then the ultimate and permanent theocracy of true Israel, spoken of by the prophets, will be a reality. Then the promises made to Abraham and to his seed will be fully fulfilled. Then, and then only, will God's "will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10).

Zionism

In the light of these salient facts, how shall we regard the present return of the Jews to Palestine? A study of the Zionist movement, which brought forth the establishment of the present Jewish State, reveals it to be basically secular.

As such it could never meet the specifications of the promised fulfillment.

Theodor Herzl, founder of Zionism, is usually characterized as an irreligious man. A reading of his sensational treatise *Der Judenstaat* (The Jewish State), first published in 1896, indicates that this movement was a purely political plan, inspired by philanthropy and pity toward the many suffering Jews in exile. It would be achieved by political and financial negotiations.

In this treatise Herzl poses the question, "Shall we, thus, end by having a theocracy?" His answer is clear and forthright, "No. Faith unites us, knowledge makes us free. We shall therefore permit not the least theocratic tendencies to come to the fore on the part of our clergy. We shall know how to restrict them to their temples, just as we shall restrict our professional army to their barracks. Army and clergy shall be honored, as their noble functions require and deserve. But they have no privileged voice in the administration of the state which confers distinction upon them, else they would conjure up external and internal complications to vex us.

"Every man will be as free and unrestricted in his belief or his unbelief as he is in his cultural ties. And should it happen that men of other creeds and other nationalities come to live among us, we shall accord them honorable protection and equality before the law. We have learned toleration in Europe."

How have the plans of Herzl worked out for the Zionist State of Israel? While in Israel in 1965 the writer attended a lecture by Dr. Shlomo Avinery, on the faculty of Hebrew University, in which he discussed government in Israel. "Zionism," he emphasized, "was purely a secular, political movement without a religious aspect." "In a sense," he continued, "it grew up as a revolt against religious life as

lived by the Jews in the exiled countries."

Dr. Mordecai Kaplan, speaking for Reconstructionist Judaism, has declared, "The State of Israel must not be counted on to be a theocratic state, governed by a supernaturally revealed Law. It will have to be a democratic state governed by laws, in the making of which non-Jews will have a share. Judaism, as the religious civilization of the entire Jewish people, must, therefore, detach its destiny from any kind of a political state."—*Questions Jews Ask: Reconstructionist Answers*, p. 402.

Religion in Israel

Because of the secular nature of the Zionist movement, it was opposed for many years by Orthodox Jewish leaders. Nevertheless, many of the Jews seeking refuge in Palestine were of the Orthodox faith. One of the real problems in Israel today is that posed by the continuing conflict between the Orthodox and the more liberal Jews. The State of Israel is giving to Orthodox Judaism token recognition and collaboration, but is not united with her in the concept of a theocracy. Orthodox Judaism, on the other hand, insists that the State of Israel must change its present status and identify itself with Judaism as the Orthodox define it.

In Jerusalem I listened attentively to a lecture by Pinhas Lapid, editor of the government press office, speaking on the subject "Religious Movements in Israel." He declared, "If today all Catholics in all lands had to live according to the strictest Jesuit interpretation of canon law, we would then have an idea of what the Orthodox Jewish rabbis are trying to enforce upon the more than two million Jews in Israel today."

The extreme power exercised by these Orthodox Jews is indicated by the dual nature of the government. It is a dual government inasmuch as it is controlled by both the

Knesset, or legislative body, *and* the Rabbinical Council. Only Orthodox rabbis can sit on this council. They are the supreme judges in all matters related to meats, methods of slaughter, imports, and all laws pertaining to family life such as marriage, divorce, adoption, et cetera. The Ministry of Social Welfare is also under the direction of this council. There are twenty-five laws that give the rabbis their authority. A man must be Orthodox to qualify as a rabbi to belong on the council, and the chief rabbi decides who is Orthodox.

A trend favoring the more liberal religious elements was seen in the election of October, 1972, when the two chief rabbis were voted out of office and replaced by younger men with records of greater leniency in the interpretation of Torah law.

Many of the religious laws of Israel pertain to the Sabbath. These vary from community to community. One day, as I strolled into the heart of the western city of Jerusalem, I was confronted with a mass street demonstration. Upon asking what it was all about, a shopkeeper responded, "They are protesting the Sabbath closing laws."

As it developed, a state-wide Sabbath closing bill had been introduced into the Knesset. This proposed law was debated over a period of seven weeks and finally tabled. The majority labor party had voted so many exceptions to the bill that, according to the religious parties, it would have officially legalized Sabbathbreaking. Because of this the rabbis that had initiated the legislation had it withdrawn.

Politics and Religion

There are presently ten political parties represented in the Knesset. In addition there are eleven smaller ones not represented, since they failed in the election of December

31, 1973, to gain 1 per cent of the vote (15,668), the number necessary to win a Knesset seat. There were 2,037,478 eligible voters. The multiplicity of parties is the result of an effort to have the exiles from many countries all represented. The third and fourth most important parties, according to the number of seats occupied, are the National Religious Party and the Torah Religious Front (Agudat-Poale Agudat Yisrael). Because there are so many parties, none is ever a majority. This means that a coalition is necessary. Ever since the first election of 1949 the coalition has consisted of a curious union of the moderate Mapai Party and Labor Alignment with the Orthodox religious parties, except that in recent years the Ultra-Orthodox Torah Religious Front has refused to go along. In the new Rabin coalition the National Religious Party has been excluded. It is this union that has given the Laborites control over the government.

The religious parties make up only about 15 per cent of the Knesset. It has never been more than 17 per cent. This has no relation to the number of Jews practicing religion, but represents those with political interests. The 15 per cent gives these parties a balance of power far out of proportion to their size. They can, and frequently do, dominate the assembly.

The power they exercise was brought clearly to focus in the formation of the new government following the New Year's Eve election of 1973. Golda Meir's Labor-Mapam Alignment won only fifty-one of the one hundred twenty seats, six less than previously held, whereas the Likud right-center opposition party jumped by seven to a total of thirty-six seats. The National Religious Party dropped from twelve to ten seats. Mrs. Meir desperately needed those ten seats. She could not expect the four seats of the Torah Religious Front.

The National Religious Party drove a hard bargain over the old issue "Who is a Jew?" The narrow orthodox definition is that "according to the Halacha" conversions to Judaism exclude Reform and Conservative conversions. Mrs. Meir could not afford to alienate millions of Reform Jews in America. Due primarily to the political-military emergency situation then prevailing on the Syrian border, a compromise was reached "on the basis of an assurance that the problem of conversion would be studied by a committee of ministers and that, meanwhile, questionable conversions would not be registered."—*Religious News Service*, March 11, 1974.

The new Meir government was composed of a coalition of the Laborites, the National Religious Party, and Independent Liberals, the latter holding four seats in the Knesset. The Ultra-Orthodox refused to join. The coalition that won approval came only after three months of tortuous negotiations. Then, on April 11, 75-year-old Premier Golda Meir submitted her formal resignation because of deep divisions within her own Labor Party over preparedness before the October Yom Kippur war.

Elected by the Labor Party to succeed her was the 52-year-old Labor Minister, Itzhak Rabin, the first native-born Israeli to head the Israeli Government and the youngest premier in Israel's history. Immediately upon his nomination on April 23, Zevl Bernstein, secretary of the National Religious Party, expressed the hope that Mr. Rabin "would learn a lesson from the failure of the Prime Minister [Golda Meir], and work for a formation of a government of national unity," emphasizing that the issue of "Who is a Jew?" must be resolved. Without the assurance of an acceptable solution to this problem the National Religious Party voted unanimously on May 6 not to join the coalition. As we have seen, the party was

left out. This and other deep-seated religious issues have been at the root of the internal problems that have plagued the new government.

One of the problems discussed by Dr. Avinery in the lecture previously referred to, is that which has existed over the adoption of a national constitution. The only Jewish State Orthodox Judaism will accept is one which supposedly will be established as an act of God at the coming of the Messiah. This being so, the only constitution the group would accept is based on the laws of the Torah. Perhaps a minority of 20 to 30 per cent would favor such a religious constitution. On the other hand, to adopt a secular constitution, which would be favored by 70 to 80 per cent, would be to impose a secular society on a very important minority. Since a national constitution by its very nature would define the state as either secular or religious, a real problem is posed. The prospects of ever adopting a national theocratic constitution is a very faint hope.

It is highly unlikely that Israel would ever agree to a complete separation of synagogue and state. As Chief Rabbi Shlomo Goren put it, "Because of Jewish law we still exist. Our charter on *Eretz Israel* [the Land of Israel] is based on the Torah. There can never be a disestablishment of religion in Israel because of this link."—*Newsweek*, January 21, 1974.

Strongest opponents to Israel's synagogue-state relationship is the new Civil Rights Party, headed by Mrs. Shulamit Aloni, which surprisingly won three seats in the New Year's Eve election. She battled openly against the "religious coercion." Israel, she declared, "is a theocracy known in public as a secular state which is selling out basic human rights and freedom of conscience."—*Ibid.*

Prof. Ephraim Urbach of Hebrew University argues,

"The mixing of politics and religion is damaging to the cause of religion. . . . Religion would attract many more if it were not forced down our throats by the rabbinate." —*Ibid.*

A Restless People

There is a growing restlessness among Israeli citizens over the restriction imposed on them through the Orthodox rabbinate. Every effort on the part of Orthodox leaders to put that nation under a fully religio-political regime of government is obviously doomed to failure. Even if it succeeded, it would be a far cry from the state of peace and tranquillity depicted in the prophecies of the restoration.

The trend, however, is clearly toward a greater liberalism. Rabbi Richard G. Hirsch, head of the Reform Commission on Israel, sees "liberal" Judaism playing a major role in the future State of Israel. He declares that two thirds of all Israeli Jews "don't believe in God in a formal, religious sense." This Reform clergyman is now the director of the World Union for Progressive Judaism in Jerusalem. Commenting on Rabbi Hirsch, *The Religious News Service* of October 25, 1972, declared, "The Chief Rabbis do not recognize him as a rabbi in Israel, he said, but added that the existence of the World Union of Progressive Judaism in Israel, like the Hebrew Union College there, is evidence that no governmental hostility to non-orthodox Judaism exists."

According to Dr. Avinery, at least 70 per cent of the Jews in Israel are irreligious. This he said was due partly to the reaction to Orthodox Judaism, but primarily to the secular nature of Zionism.

Dr. Kaplan, referred to previously, commenting on the Orthodox rabbinate, writes, "This reduces religion to

a form of authoritarian clericalism which degrades and corrupts it. Instead of relying for its authority on its ability to satisfy the spiritual needs of Jews, it comes to depend on coercion and the police power of the state. Its main concern becomes the political defense of the vested interest of the rabbinate and other religious functionaries rather than the cultivation of the spirit of piety and sincere devotion to spiritual and ethical values. Only a free religion can be a sincere religion, and a religion that is dependent on the state and partisan politics cannot be free.”—*Questions Jews Ask: Reconstructionist Answers*, pp. 414, 415.

The student of the Scriptures will find it very difficult to find in the rise and development of the present Jewish State and in conditions in the State of Israel today a fulfillment, or even the prospects of fulfillment, of the glorious promises of the ancient prophets. Actually, the true Israelites, whether Jew or Gentile, do not see their future in Palestine or in Jerusalem as it is today. They look forward, rather, to a far better fulfillment of the promise.

Some will ask, How then are we to understand the prophecy of Luke 21:24, which reads, “And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled”?

Those who see in the present occupation of Jerusalem by Jews a fulfillment of this prophecy expect also that, according to prophecy, Jerusalem is to again assume a role of major significance. They envision the rebuilding of the Temple, the reinstitution of animal sacrifices, and a mass acceptance of Christ as the Messiah. All of this, these expositors declare, is to follow the treading down of the city by the Gentiles.

Obviously, such events now seem very remote. In fact,

any effort toward the rebuilding of the Temple where now stands the Dome of the Rock would create an international situation of major importance. Thus we see that although the claim may be made that the period of the Gentiles has come to an end, the events expected to follow are not in evidence, nor are they even a remote possibility in the foreseeable future.

How else may we understand Luke 21:24? This prophecy forms a part of the discourse given by Jesus on the Mount of Olives in which, in blended form, He outlined the signs that would foretell both the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world. This discourse is reported by Matthew (chapter 24), Mark (chapter 13), and by Luke. The fact that this particular event under consideration is noted only by Luke and omitted by the other two evangelists would seem to indicate that it was not of major significance. Also, Luke, rather than enlarging upon it, gives it but a passing word and proceeds with other major signs. Since this discourse interrelates events having to do with both the fall of Jerusalem and the end of the world, it is possible that this phrase had some reference to the former.

If the reference is to the latter, then we have the following to consider: Although the State of Israel occupies Old Jerusalem in a *de facto* manner, this occupation is not yet recognized officially by the nations of the world. The United Nations, the Vatican State, and some other powerful and influential powers of earth thus far have favored the internationalization of the city as a place sacred to three of the world's great religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

Recognizing the inherent dangers of the present situation Pope Paul issued a special document April 5, 1974, in which he called for special financial assistance for

"the Church in the Holy Land" and took this occasion to emphasize the need of international guarantees for Jerusalem. The Pope expressed his anxiety over "the continuation of the state of tension in the Middle East," which, he said, "constituted a serious and constant danger" to peace in the world. He called for "a clear juridical basis internationally recognized and guaranteed."—*Religious News Service*, April 5, 1974.

In 1971 the late Rabbi Joshua Heschel had an interview with the Pope. According to *Religious News Service*, after thanking the Pope for "the understanding he had shown for the spiritual link of the Jewish people with the Holy City," Rabbi Heschel concluded, "all of Jewish history is a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and the union of the people and the City is, in Jewish eyes, a sign of grace, a gift of God's providence in this age of darkness." To this the Pope is supposed to have replied, "I will remember your words," adding, "I hope that you and I will meet in Jerusalem."—*Ibid.*, May 21, 1971.

Presently the State of Israel does not agree to the status of an international city. As late as April 18, 1972, Golda Meir stated emphatically, "Jerusalem, the eternal city, shall remain for all time a unified city of the capital of the State of Israel."—*Ibid.*, April 18, 1972.

But we must recognize the changes that have occurred since then, particularly as they relate to the October, 1973, Yom Kippur war. The Arabs have made some gains at the bargaining table, and Jerusalem is also their prize. In February, 1974, delegates from thirty-six Moslem countries attended the second Islamic Summit Conference in Lahore, Pakistan. *Christianity Today* reported: "One of the chief items discussed at the summit was Jerusalem, a city holy to Muslims as well as to Christians and Jews. The summit called for the liberation

of Jerusalem and restoration of the city to Arab sovereignty as a 'paramount and unchangeable' prerequisite for any settlement in the Middle East. A resolution, adopted unanimously by the conference, said any proposal that did not restore Jerusalem to Arab rule would be unacceptable to Islamic countries. Internationalization of the city was also opposed.

"Meanwhile, a non-Muslim delegation led by Greek Orthodox patriarch Monsignor Elias IV arrived from Lebanon to extend nominal Christian support to Moslem demands on Jerusalem, and several Pakistani Christian organizations gave similar backing."—March 29, 1974.

Obviously the final word has not been spoken and we must await the unrolling of the scroll and see what is yet to be. Israel may yet make some concessions to the Gentiles in this matter in order that her existence as a state in Palestine may be secure. We can only watch and wait.

Will the Temple Be Rebuilt?

AS LONG as the old city of Jerusalem was in Jordanian hands, the possibilities of rebuilding the ancient Jewish Temple could be left in the realm of hopeful dreams by those who foresaw such an eventuality. But with the Six-Day War of 1967 and the uniting of all Jerusalem under Jewish control, the situation has changed.

There are those today who think they have strong prophetic and theological grounds for pressing for such action. According to *Christianity Today*, February 27, 1970, it was the reading of an article that appeared November 7, 1969, in *Plain Truth* magazine, published in Pasadena, California, by Herbert W. Armstrong's Church of God, that inspired Denis Michael Rohan, 28, to set fire to the Al Aksa Mosque in the Temple area of the old city. During his two-week trial, he testified that he had been chosen by God to build a temple on the site of the former one.

According to Reuben Gross, an Orthodox Jew, as stated in an article in the *Jerusalem Post* and reported in the *Christianity Today* news article, the fate of the Temple Mount "is one of the most under-discussed topics in this overarticulate age." Commenting on Rohan's actions, Gross writes, "Eschatological stirrings are touching Christians more than we Jews. . . . The Gentile thinks simple and straight. You need childlike simplicity to

grasp it. . . . We Jews have absorbed so much of the poisons of exile, we have refused to take our own history seriously."

Generally speaking, the Jews who look forward to the rebuilding of the Temple consider it as something that will occur after the coming of the Messiah. In the meantime some Christian writers continue to press the issue. As one such writer puts it, "The blueprint of Bible prophecy calls for the building of a new temple by the revived state of Israel on that very place [Mount Moriah]. The prophets have also spelled out Jerusalem as the proper capital city of the restored Jewish nation."—KEITH M. BAILEY, Superintendent, Mid-West District, Christian and Missionary Alliance, in *Christian Life*, November, 1967.

The same writer states "that God is about to restore the order He has so long planned of making Jerusalem the social, political, and religious center of the earth and the nation Israel the dominant world power."—*Ibid*.

The eschatological necessity for Jerusalem's occupation by the Jews and the building of a third temple is outlined by Lon Woodrum in his volume, *Sign From Outer Space*. The implications of such positions as they relate to the Arab-Israeli conflict, and toward efforts for a just and lasting settlement of Mid-East tensions, are at once discernible. Thus we see the necessity of a clear understanding of the Scriptures on these matters.

The Temple in History

It was while Israel was encamped at Mount Sinai that Moses, in the mount with God, first received instructions for the building of a tabernacle. The tabernacle was a portable structure consisting of two rooms, the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place, set up in an enclosure. It was transported from place to place during the period of the

wilderness wanderings, and upon the conquest of Canaan was set up at Shiloh, where it became the center of Hebrew worship for some three hundred years. After the capture of the ark of the covenant and destruction of Shiloh by the Philistines, the tabernacle was moved to Gibeon.

Later, the tabernacle was replaced by the magnificent Temple of Solomon erected on Mount Moriah in Jerusalem. Solomon's Temple was destroyed in 586 B.C. by the armies of King Nebuchadnezzar, but afterward a new one was built under the direction of Zerubbabel, the first governor of postexilic Judah. This second temple was enlarged and greatly beautified by King Herod the Great. It was Herod's Temple that stood in Jerusalem when Christ lived on earth.

The original tabernacle, its furniture, and its daily and yearly services are described in the books of Exodus and Leviticus, and in Numbers, chapters 28 and 29.

The services of the sanctuary, centering around the sacrificial offerings, pointed forward to the sacrifice of Christ, "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." When Jesus, our Saviour, died on the cross, "the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom" (Matt. 27:51). Christ's death occurred at the hour that preparations were made for slaying the lamb at the evening sacrifice and the Passover service—about three o'clock on Friday afternoon. The supernatural rending of the Temple veil was God's message to man that the true Lamb had been slain, that type had met antitype. No longer would it be necessary to bring the animal sacrifices. The Jewish Temple on earth, the services of which pointed forward to the coming of the true Messiah and His vicarious death, had served its purpose and fulfilled its usefulness.

The prophecy of the seventy weeks (490 literal years) of Daniel 9:24-27, pointing forward to the ministry and death of the Messiah, indicates clearly that the ceremonial ritual of the Temple with its sacrifices would end with His death. "Seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks (483 years)" from the "going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem" were to reach "unto the Messiah" (verse 25). At the end of the "threescore and two weeks" the Messiah was to be "cut off" (verse 26). This was to occur "in the midst of the [seventieth] week" (verse 27).

Verse 27 declares, "And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week *he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease.*" As predicted, Jesus' ministry lasted three and a half years. In the midst of the seventieth week, which mid-point was halfway between His baptism and anointing in the autumn of A.D. 27 and the autumn of A.D. 34 (the end of the seventy weeks—490 years), He was sacrificed as the true Passover Lamb (1 Cor. 5:7). This was in the spring of A.D. 31.

Notice that the prophecy states that at that time "the sacrifice and the oblation" were to cease. The ceremonial sacrificial services were to continue no longer, for in the sacrifice of the Messiah, type had met antitype. That the Temple service would lose its significance was intimated by Jesus when He declared, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." Also when He foretold the complete destruction of the Temple (Matt. 24:1, 2). One of the accusations brought against Stephen at the time he was stoned was, "For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us" (Acts 6:14).

It is of the ceremonial ritual with its sacrificial sys-

tem that the apostle Paul spoke, when he declared, "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances" (Eph. 2:14, 15). "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross" (Col. 2:14). Verse 17 declares these were "a shadow of things to come."

A Temple in the Heavens

That the services of the sanctuary were types pointing forward to the death of the Saviour who was to come is clearly taught in Scripture. It is also taught that there exists another temple, albeit not on earth. When Moses was first commanded to build the tabernacle he was told, "And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. According to all that I shew thee, *after the pattern* of the tabernacle" shown to him in the mount (Ex. 25:8, 9; cf. Heb. 8:5).

What was the pattern shown to Moses? None other than the tabernacle in heaven, the great original. The Epistle to the Hebrews, which is the New Testament counterpart to the book of Leviticus in the Old Testament, makes this clear. It also reveals that the ministry of the common priest in the earthly sanctuary was a type of the ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary.

Hebrews 8, verses 1 and 2, declares: "Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man."

From this we see clearly that there is a sanctuary *in*

heaven, of which the earthly was a type, and that there Christ ministers for us. Speaking of the work of the priest in the earthly sanctuary, we read, "Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things" (verse 5). Phillips' translation reads, "These men are serving what is only a pattern or reproduction of things that exist in Heaven."

This is repeated in chapter 9, verse 24, "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." Other translations use the term "pattern," "counterpart," "copy," "type," and "symbol," in place of the word "figure." Phillips' translation reads, "Christ did not therefore enter into any holy places made by human hands (however truly these may represent heavenly realities), but he entered Heaven itself to make his appearance before God as High Priest on our behalf." The prophet John speaks of "the temple which is in heaven," and which is called "the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven" (Rev. 14: 17; 15:5-8; see also Rev. 11:19; 16:1, 17).

It is significant that Jewish sources also make reference to a heavenly sanctuary as the counterpart of the earthly. The *Jewish Encyclopaedia* declares, "The sanctuary below corresponds to the sanctuary above (Ta'an. 5a). The ladder which Jacob saw in a dream reached to the gate of heaven, where the celestial sanctuary was erected."—Art. "Sanctuary," Vol. XI, p. 39, col. 2. Also in the *Talmud Tractate Hagigah*, it is stated clearly, "The earthly Temple corresponds to the heavenly Sanctuary."—*The Babylonian Talmud* (London: Soncino Press, 1938), chap. 2, p. 70, note 2.

The Christian writer T. C. Edwards, in "Epistle to the Hebrews," *The Expositor's Bible*, pages 135, 136, states

it this way: "Christ must enter a sanctuary in order to present the sacrifice slain on Calvary. . . . But what sanctuary shall He enter? He could not approach the holiest place in the earthly temple. . . . Christ has transformed the heaven of glory into the holiest place of a temple. . . . He, as High-priest, presents His sacrifice."

This same truth is expressed also in Apocryphal writings: "Thou hast given command to build a temple on thy holy mountain, and an altar . . . a copy of the holy tent which thou didst prepare from the beginning."

— *Wisdom of Solomon*, chap. 9:8, R.S.V., p. 95, col. 2.

Passion Play of the Ages

Before Christ's atoning death, the eyes of men were directed to the earthly sanctuary, or Temple, where the passion play of the ages was being acted out in the typical ceremonies of the sacrificial ritual. The animal was slain in the court, then the blood was taken into the Temple and sprinkled before the veil, behind which were the ark of the covenant and the mercy seat. The ark contained God's standard of righteousness, His holy ten-commandment law inscribed on tables of stone. The broken law demanded the death of the sinner (see Eze. 18:4, 20; Rom. 6:23). The slain animal and the flowing blood represented Christ, whose blood would be shed "for the remission of sins" (Rom. 3:25; cf. 1 Peter 1:18, 19). The entire ritual was both symbolic and prophetic. Christ was slain in the court, this world. Then He ascended to heaven where, in the true tabernacle, He presents His atoning and cleansing blood in behalf of those sinners who look to Him in faith. The promise is, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

Thus, as the eyes of man before Calvary were centered on the Jerusalem Temple, so after the cross we are to follow Christ our great High Priest by faith into the heavenly temple, where He now offers His blood and life of righteousness to every repentant sinner. On Calvary the blood was shed. In the sanctuary above, the merits of the atonement are applied to every truly penitent, obedient, believing soul.

The Jerusalem Temple Destroyed

In His Olivet discourse recorded in Matthew 24, Jesus foretold the total destruction of Jerusalem's last Temple. He said, "There shall not be left here one stone upon another" (verse 2). Looking ahead to the day that would see the awful ruin of the Temple and the flight of Christians from the city, He counseled: "But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day" (verse 20).

It was in A.D. 70, some 39 years later, that the terrible siege and final destruction of the city and Temple occurred. This had been foretold in Daniel 9:26; Matt. 24:15; Mark 13:14. To the Jews who had failed to recognize the Messiah, and who still looked to the Temple on earth as the center of their religious as well as political life, this was a terrible blow. Abraham Joshua Heschel writes:

Throughout the ages it was as if since the year 70 time stood still. All calamities were seen as a sequel to the destruction of Jerusalem. The disaster was constantly lived and relived, the anguish never ceased. . . . "Since the Temple was destroyed the world has not witnessed the true radiance of the sun."—*Israel: An Echo of Eternity*, p. 59. Throughout ten centuries there were those who would rise at midnight every night, except Friday night, put on clothes of mourning, cover the head with ashes, sit on the floor, recite prayers expressing grief over the destruction of the Temple and the suffering of God's children in the dispersion.—*Ibid.*, p. 65.

The huge foundation stones of the western wall of the present temple area in Jerusalem date back to the time of Herod the Great. Here through the centuries, when political conditions permitted, Jews would gather to wail the destruction of their Temple, and pray for its restoration. It was the conflict that broke out in this area that precipitated the crisis between Jews and Arabs that resulted in the British withdrawal from Palestine, the partition of the land, and establishment of the Jewish State.

The area adjoining this wall was the first to be cleared away following the Six-Day War. It is presently the site of the Israeli's most sacred festivities. Here also pious Jews gather daily, continuing to pray for the Messianic kingdom of the prophecies.

God's Plan for Israel

The covenant made originally to Abraham embraced the entire world. The promise was, "in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:3). In renewing the covenant just before the birth of Isaac the words were repeated, "All the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him" (chap. 18:18). Later the angel messenger again declared, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (chap. 22:18; cf. chaps. 26:4; 28:14).

God's purpose in setting apart Israel as a nation was that they might become a blessing to other nations, and that His name might be made known "throughout all the earth" (Ex. 9:16). By obedience to the conditions of the covenant, they were to be placed far above other peoples in wisdom and understanding. But this would be so that through them the purposes of God for "all nations of the earth" might be fulfilled.

Through the years of Israel's occupation of the Land

of Promise, she lost sight of God's design for the salvation of the heathen. This being so, it became necessary for this plan to be set forth anew. David declared, "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee." "The heathen shall fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth thy glory" (Ps. 22: 27; 102:15).

In the solemn prayer that Solomon offered at the time he dedicated the first Temple to the service of God, he prayed for the aliens who were not of the people of Israel, but who should come from a far country to worship in Jerusalem, that the Lord might hear their prayers, "that *all the people of the earth* may know thy name, to fear thee, as do thy people Israel; and that they may know that this house, which I have builded, is called by thy name" (1 Kings 8:41-43; 2 Chron. 6:32, 33).

God's purpose for permitting the Jews to go into exile was not only that through this means they might be brought back to Him but that in the places of their exile they might impart the knowledge of the true God. Even during the period of the Babylonian captivity of Israel, the Lord used a remnant of faithful Jews to enlighten the heathen world concerning His purposes and plans for the human race. By decrees of King Nebuchadnezzar (see Daniel, chapters 2, 3, and 4), Belshazzar (Dan. 5), Darius the Mede (Dan. 6), Cyrus the Great (2 Chron. 36:22, 23; Ezra 1:1-4), Darius Hystaspes (Ezra 4-6), and Artaxerxes I (Ezra 6:14; 7:6-28), in many languages and to many peoples and nations, mankind was officially made acquainted with the God of Israel and His plans for the human race, down to the time of the coming of the Messiah to reign as Lord of lords and King of kings over the whole earth for ever and ever.

Those that would accept the true God from among the heathen were to be numbered with spiritual Israel—God's church on earth. The promise of the Lord through Isaiah was: "The sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the Lord, to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant; even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer . . . for *mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people*. The Lord God which gathereth the outcasts of Israel saith, Yet will I gather others to him, beside those that are gathered unto him" (Isa. 56:6-8).

This was the glorious plan to be accomplished through the Israelites. But their hearts were untouched by the needs of the nations around them and God's purposes were lost sight of.

A Brighter Day

Although the cause seemed well-nigh hopeless, a new and brighter day was yet to dawn, for there came to them the promises of the coming of the Sun of Righteousness with healing in His wings. Isaiah stood foremost among the prophets to whom was given the wondrous vision of future glory through the coming Messiah. He declared, "It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth" (chap. 49:6).

Isaiah was permitted to look down the course of time and behold the literal fulfillment of these glorious promises. Through him the Lord gave the commission, "Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the

curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes; for thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles" (chap. 54:2, 3).

This charge and promise formed the basis of William Carey's famous sermon preached May 31, 1792, and inspired him to go to India. It and other prophecies are meeting their fulfillment today with the advance of missions to "every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" (Rev. 14:6). "In that day," says Isaiah, "there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people. . . . And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth" (Isa. 11:10-12).

"Turn you to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope" (Zech. 9:12). The promise is made, "I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them" (Isa. 42:16).

A Better Country

WHAT OF the future of the Jews with respect to Palestine? Is Israel destined to greatness there? Will the temple ultimately be rebuilt? In search of an answer we cannot gainsay the conditional nature of the promises made to ancient Israel. According to the conditions upon which the promises were given, Israel as a nation forfeited her divine right to the land by her disobedience and rejection of the true Messiah.

We must recognize, however, that some of the prophecies of restoration were fulfilled in the return of the Jews from captivity in Babylon. All of the prophecies relating to their inheritance of the land were made either before Israel's captivity, during the captivity, or at the time of the return.

However, there is yet to be a more glorious future fulfillment of the prophecies of restoration, a restoration in which all the true spiritual seed of Abraham, the faithful of all ages, will share.

The eleventh chapter of Hebrews, the "Westminster Abbey" of the Bible, the "Biblical Hall of Fame," lists the long line of notables, the great patriarchs and prophets of the ages, and briefly recalls how they conquered through faith. Concerning them we read in verses 13-16, "All of these whom we have mentioned maintained their faith but died without actually receiving God's promises,

though they had seen them in the distance, had hailed them as true and were quite convinced of their reality. They freely admitted that they lived on this earth as exiles and foreigners. Men who say that mean, of course, that their eyes are fixed upon their true homeland. If they had meant the particular country they had left behind, they had ample opportunity to return. No, the fact is that they longed for a better country altogether, nothing less than a heavenly one. And because of this faith of theirs, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for in sober truth he has prepared for them a city" (Phillips).*

Speaking specifically of Abraham, to whom the promise was first given, we read in verses 9 and 10, "It was faith that kept him journeying like a foreigner through the land of promise, with no more home than the tents which he shared with Isaac and Jacob, co-heirs with him of the promise. For Abraham's eyes were looking forward to that city with solid foundations of which God himself is both architect and builder" (Phillips).

The many promises of the glorious return and habitation of the land can only be understood in the light of this ultimate fulfillment, a kingdom not made with hands to be ushered in by the return of Christ, and the making of all things new (see Matt. 5:5; Ps. 37:9, 11, 22; Prov. 11:31).

Heirs of the Promise

To this inheritance we are all invited through Jesus Christ. Paul declares, "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is

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neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:26-29). The promise to Abraham was "that he should be heir of the world" (Rom. 4:13). And the promise is made to all that "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:29).

According to these words, all the blessings promised to Abraham and to his seed will come to those who are in Christ Jesus. As stated in Galatians 3:14, "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

Men of all nations may become a part of the true Israel of God, and heirs of the promise, but only through Christ, the true Messiah. Paul distinguishes clearly between "Israel after the flesh" (1 Cor. 10:18), and the true "Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16).

Spiritual Israel is also described by the apostle Peter, "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light: which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy" (1 Peter 2:9, 10).

The way to become a part of the true Israel of God is to obtain mercy. This we receive through Jesus Christ. And in Him the wall of partition is broken down. There is no longer separation between Jew and Gentile. We are all one in Him. "There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but Christ is all, and in all" (Col. 3:11).

Paul declares, "Wherefore remember, that ye being

in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: but now *in Christ Jesus* ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ . . . and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone" (Eph. 2:11-20).

Isaiah, Prophet of Hope

As a part of the true Israel of God, we become heirs of the promise of an eternal inheritance that fadeth not away. Isaiah heralded this better day with words that ring with hope for the future. "Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off. . . . Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities: thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken. But there the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby. For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king; he will save us. . . . And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that

dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity" (Isa. 33:17-24).

"Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away" (chap. 51:11).

"Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean. . . . How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth! Thy watchman shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion" (chap. 52:1-8).

"For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. . . . Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate. . . . Behold, the Lord hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the Lord: and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken" (chap. 62:1-12).

"For, behold, *I create new heavens and a new earth*: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create:

for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. . . . And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree [Septuagint and Targum "tree of life"] are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them. And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord" (chap. 65: 17-25).

Obviously life will be very real under conditions here described. But it will be very different from the sorrow and grief known today. This blessed experience will not come as the result of man's doings. It can never be the fruit of war, or politics, or financial maneuverings. It will come only through the supernatural intervention of Jesus Christ into human affairs.

Then shall be fulfilled the comforting and assuring promise, "For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord" (chap. 66:22, 23).

A Wonderful Prophecy

ON THE capitol dome in Washington, D.C., are engraved these prophetic words, "One God; One law; One element. One far off divine event to which the whole creation moves." That divine event is nothing less than Jesus' return as King of kings and Lord of lords, and the setting up of His eternal kingdom of peace.

It is of the ultimate establishment of this kingdom of glory that the prophecy of the great image of Daniel 2 speaks. By the four metallic parts of the image—the head of gold, the breast and arms of silver, the belly and thighs of brass, and the legs of iron—are represented the successive kingdoms of earth—Babylon, Medo-Persia, Grecia, and Rome (Dan. 2:38-40). This has been the interpretation of Biblical scholars through the centuries, both Jewish and Christian. It is found in the Talmud, the Targum, and the Midrash in statements predating the coming of Jesus. It is so interpreted by Josephus, Jewish historian, and by Johanan ben Zakkai, both of the first century A.D., and Akiba ben Joseph of the second century. This has been the generally held view of Jewish, Protestant, and Catholic scholars alike through the centuries.

Daniel 2:41 explains the ten toes of the image to mean the division of the fourth empire, Rome, into ten parts. This interpretation was understood as far back as the second and third centuries by such leading church

fathers as Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Hippolytus, although the complete division into the ten parts was not complete until A.D. 476.

The most significant part of this prophecy is what ultimately becomes of these earthly kingdoms. Describing what happened in the vision, Daniel declares: "Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them in pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth" (verses 34, 35).

The explanation of these verses is clear: "In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but *it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms*, and it shall stand for ever" (verse 44).

Throughout history, Jews as well as Christians have accepted the Messianic nature of this prophecy. According to the prophecy, the kingdoms of this world will be destroyed by the stone that smites the image on its feet. This being so, *we must recognize this prophecy as precluding the possibility of any present state—including Israel—ever extending its national existence beyond the second coming of the Messiah* and the beginning of the millennial reign set forth in Revelation 20. There is nothing in Scripture to sustain the view that the establishment of the modern State of Israel was a fulfillment of prophecy and a prelude to the soon coming of the Messiah, to reign as King over the Jews and the rest of the world for a thousand years.

It is understandable that the Jews, or any other nation, would welcome a development that would give them such

world prominence as the interpretation of prophecy referred to projects. But it is also unthinkable to the Jews of today that they would, as a nation, ever officially recognize Jesus of Nazareth as the King Messiah. The Bible prophecies clearly introduce the Messianic kingdom as a supernatural event associated with the return of Christ in glory to encompass all humanity. But it will have no connection whatever with the present State of Israel or any other state now existing on earth.

A Parallel Prophecy

It is in this context that the parallel prophecy of Daniel 7 is also to be understood. Here the successive world empires—Babylon, Medo-Persia, Grecia, and Rome—are represented by the lion, the bear, the leopard, and the “great and terrible” beast. Although in this vision additional events (such as those connected with the ten horns and the blasphemous and despotic eleventh horn) are introduced to transpire during the Christian dispensation, the culmination, as in Daniel 2, is in the establishment of the Messianic kingdom. The manner is reminiscent of the stone that became a great mountain and filled the earth. “I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days. . . . And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed” (Dan. 7:13, 14).

The kingdom, lost through sin, is now restored to its rightful ruler. Verse 18 declares, “But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever.” After describing the works of antichrist, here symbolized by the little horn power of

verses 8, 24 and 25, the prophecy concludes: "But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion. . . . And the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him" (verses 26, 27).

It was no doubt to this great day of final restoration that Jesus had reference when, on the occasion of the Last Supper, He said to His disciples: "I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and *sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel*" (Luke 22:29, 30).

Matthew 19:28 makes it clear that the judging of the apostles will be as Christ's associates when He Himself sits on the throne of His kingdom. "When the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

These promises do assure a restoration of the kingdom, a universal kingdom. Then the promise made to Abraham, "that he should be the *heir of the world*" (Rom. 4:13), will be fulfilled. In this everlasting kingdom the rule will be under the Messianic Son of David. That Christ would sit upon the throne of David was foretold by the angel to Mary in announcing His birth: "And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David. And *he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end*" (Luke 1:31-33).

Long years before, Isaiah had prophesied, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting

Father, The Prince of Peace. *Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever*" (Isa. 9:6, 7).

The Coming of the Messiah King

This reign of eternal peace for the righteous will be ushered in with the second coming of Jesus. His royal return to this planet to receive the faithful is presented in graphic terms in Revelation 19. Described as riding upon a white horse, symbol of royalty, He descends through the skies (verse 14): "And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron. . . . And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS" (verses 14-16).

Just before His death Jesus gave the promise: "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:2, 3).

The promise of Christ's return was repeated on the occasion of His ascension to heaven. Of this we read, "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:9-11).

To the prophet John was given glorious revelations of the future home of the saved: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" (Rev. 21:1, 2).

In the two concluding chapters of the book of Revelation we read of this "pearly white" city, the New Jerusalem, with its massive walls, its pearly gates, and its river and tree of life. This city, to which Abraham and the prophets looked, is now in the heavens. The prophet John saw it there. It is the very city that Jesus promised to make ready for His true followers. And it is to this city that the faithful, both Jew and Gentile, will be taken at the glorious return of the Messiah.

Of the Second Advent we read, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:16, 17).

In this passage the resurrection of the just is associated with Christ's return. After this event the saints raised from the dead receive their eternal inheritance.

The Millennial Reign

According to Revelation 20:4, it will be the resurrection of the just which, as we have seen, occurs at the second coming of Jesus that will inaugurate the millennial reign. John declares, "And they lived ["came to life," Moffatt*] and reigned with Christ a thousand years." A second resur-

* From: *The Bible: A New Translation* by James Moffatt. Copyright by James Moffatt 1954. Used by permission of Harper & Row, Publishers, Incorporated.

rection, that of the unjust, will follow at the end of the thousand years, for verse 5 continues, "But the *rest of the dead* lived not again until the thousand years were finished." This millennial period is thus clearly marked out as occurring between the two resurrections. In John 5:28, 29, Jesus speaks of these two resurrections: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the *resurrection of life*; and they that have done evil, unto the *resurrection of damnation*."

It is important to notice that this thousand-year reign of the redeemed will be with Christ in the heavenly city that He went away to prepare for His true followers (see John 14:1-3). Revelation 20:6 declares, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection." it goes on to say that those who do "shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."

According to 1 Thessalonians 4:17, at the coming of Christ and the resurrection of the just, the righteous then living on earth will be "caught up together with them [the resurrected righteous dead] in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." As John puts it, "They came to life and reigned along with the Christ for a thousand years" (Rev. 20:4, Moffatt).

These scriptures preclude an earthly millennial reign. They preclude the possibility of the present Jewish State or any other currently existing state ever enlarging its borders or influence to the point of bringing the whole world under the rule of a kingdom of universal peace. As indicated by the vision of the great image of Daniel 2, the stone that becomes a great mountain and fills the whole earth, representing God's universal kingdom, is "cut out without hands" (verse 34). It smites the image on the feet, breaking it to pieces, "and the wind carried them away, *that no place*

was found for them" (verses 34, 35). Jesus, before He went away, said, "I go to prepare a place for you." He then continued, "I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

There is total agreement in the Scriptures that the millennial reign begins with the second coming of Jesus and the resurrection of the just; that both the righteous dead then raised and the righteous then living will ascend to heaven, to the place made ready for them, and that the glorious eternal reign with Christ will then begin and continue in heaven one thousand years.

The Earth Made Empty

But what of the wicked? What is to become of them? Will they have a second opportunity to accept the true Messiah during the millennium? As to the unrighteous *dead*, we have already noted, "The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished" (Rev. 20:5). Obviously, they remain in their graves during the millennium.

What will happen to the wicked who are alive at the time of our Lord's return to take the righteous? Many of the finally impenitent will be destroyed by the seven last plagues of Revelation 16. Those surviving these terrible scourges will be destroyed at Christ's coming. In Revelation 19:21 we read, "And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse [Christ], which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh."

According to the picture here presented, the wicked will be dead during the thousand years. "Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty. . . . The land shall be utterly emptied" (Isa. 24:1-3).

Describing conditions during this period, Jeremiah

wrote, "I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void. . . . I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down *at the presence of the Lord*, and by his fierce anger. For thus hath the Lord said, The whole land shall be desolate; yet will I not make a full end" (Jer. 4:23-27). The scene is described again, "And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground" (chap. 25:33).

Obviously there will be no second opportunity for salvation on the part of sinners during the millennium. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb. 9:27). "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" (chap. 2:3). To neglect salvation now is to be lost forever. "To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts" (chap. 4:7).

While the wicked lie dead upon the earth during the millennium, the great originator of sin, Satan himself, will be here to witness the carnage and contemplate the results of his deceitful work. John declares, "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years" (Rev. 20:1, 2).

The words "bottomless pit" ("abyss," N.E.B.) have the same meaning as those referring to this earth in its original chaotic state, "without form, and void" (Gen. 1:2). The devil will be bound to this earth by a great chain of circumstances, for, while the saints are in heaven, the wicked will lie slain upon the earth or in their graves, and he will have no one to tempt.

At the end of the thousand years, the circumstances are to be reversed, for we read, "that he [Satan] should deceive

the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and *after that* he must be *loosed* a little season" (Rev. 20:3). Another prophecy says: "And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and *after many days shall they be visited*" (Isa. 24:22).

Just as Satan was bound in idleness by the reward of the redeemed and the destruction of the wicked, leaving him no one to tempt, so now he is loosed by the resurrection of the wicked dead. "The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished" (Rev. 20:5), which indicates they would live after the thousand years. What follows? "And [Satan] shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city" (verses 8, 9).

The New Jerusalem

We notice in verse 9 that the heavenly city, home of the righteous for the one thousand years, is on earth at the close of the millennium. We can only conclude that at the end of this period it will come down to earth. John the revelator in vision beheld its glorious descent. "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, *coming down from God out of heaven*, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. . . . And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, *descending out of heaven from God*" (chap. 21:2-10).

Of this third coming of Jesus, the prophet Zechariah declares: "Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives. . . .

And the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee" (Zech. 14:3-5). The very place from which Jesus ascended to heaven after His resurrection now becomes "a very great valley" (verse 4), the final and permanent resting place for the New Jerusalem.

But the restoration is not yet complete. Although the city with the saints has come down from heaven to earth, the rest of the earth is still polluted and the wicked now raised to life are marshaled for battle. Under the commander they have chosen they "compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city" (Rev. 20:9). What is the result? "And fire came down from God out of heaven, and *devoured them.*" "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the *second death.* And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (verses 14, 15). Thus the wicked are eternally destroyed in the second death.

Those raised up in the second resurrection, at the close of the millennium, will be resurrected only to receive their final reward in the second death. This death by fire will completely destroy sin and sinners. "For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch [Satan the root, the wicked the branches]" (Mal. 4:1). The destruction will be so complete that "they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet" (verse 3). "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the *first resurrection:* on such the second death hath no power" (Rev. 20:6).

It is important to notice that the punishment of the wicked and their annihilation by the fire that comes down from heaven, take place upon the earth. At the close of the thousand years Satan "shall go out to deceive the nations

which are in the four quarters *of the earth*." Also, "they went up on the breadth *of the earth*" to compass the camp of the saints and the beloved city. This was just prior to the descent of the fire from God out of heaven to devour them (verses 7-9). We are told also that "the righteous shall be recompensed *in the earth*: much more the wicked and the sinner" (Prov. 11:31). With this agree the words of Peter: "Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: but the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition ("destruction," R.S.V.) of ungodly men" (2 Peter 3:6, 7).

This destruction of all people upon the earth and of the earth itself, precludes the possibility of the modern State of Israel being the restoration of Israel as foretold in the Messianic prophecies of the Bible. The present State of Israel, together with all other modern states, will cease to exist when the Messiah comes to reign universally as Lord of lords and King of kings in fulfillment of Bible prophecy.

Of the future of this planet, Peter declares: "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (verse 13). As the Lord preserved the faithful in the ark during the flood of waters, so He will preserve His faithful in the New Jerusalem during the sea of fire. Even though the earth will be wrapped in fire, yet the city is safe. "But the day of the Lord shall come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (verse 10).

The fire that destroys the wicked will cleanse and purify the earth. It will then be made over new. "For, behold, I create new heavens, and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered nor come into mind" (Isa. 65:17). "And

I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away" (Rev. 21:1).

Thus shall the true Israel occupy the land of Canaan restored as their everlasting homeland. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, and all the faithful will find the fulfillment of their hopes, and they shall be ruled by one King, Jesus Christ, the antitypical David.

"And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one. . . . And men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited" (Zech. 14:9-11).

This, dear reader, is what awaits the true Israel of God—all the faithful among the true seed of Abraham according to the flesh; all the faithful among his spiritual seed, for "if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:29). The true Israel need not look in vain to Palestine today for the fulfillment of their hopes. Rather, with Abraham and the faithful of old, "they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly" (Heb. 11:16). They look "for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (verse 10). "And the name of the city from that day shall be, The Lord is there" (Eze. 48:35).

The promise is sure: "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. . . . He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son" (Rev. 21:4-7).

The conditions for entering in are the same as those given to Israel of old. Faith in Christ Jesus, the Lamb of

God, that manifests itself in the fruit of obedience to His will. His Word declares, "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Rev. 22:14).

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. . . . He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (verses 17-20).